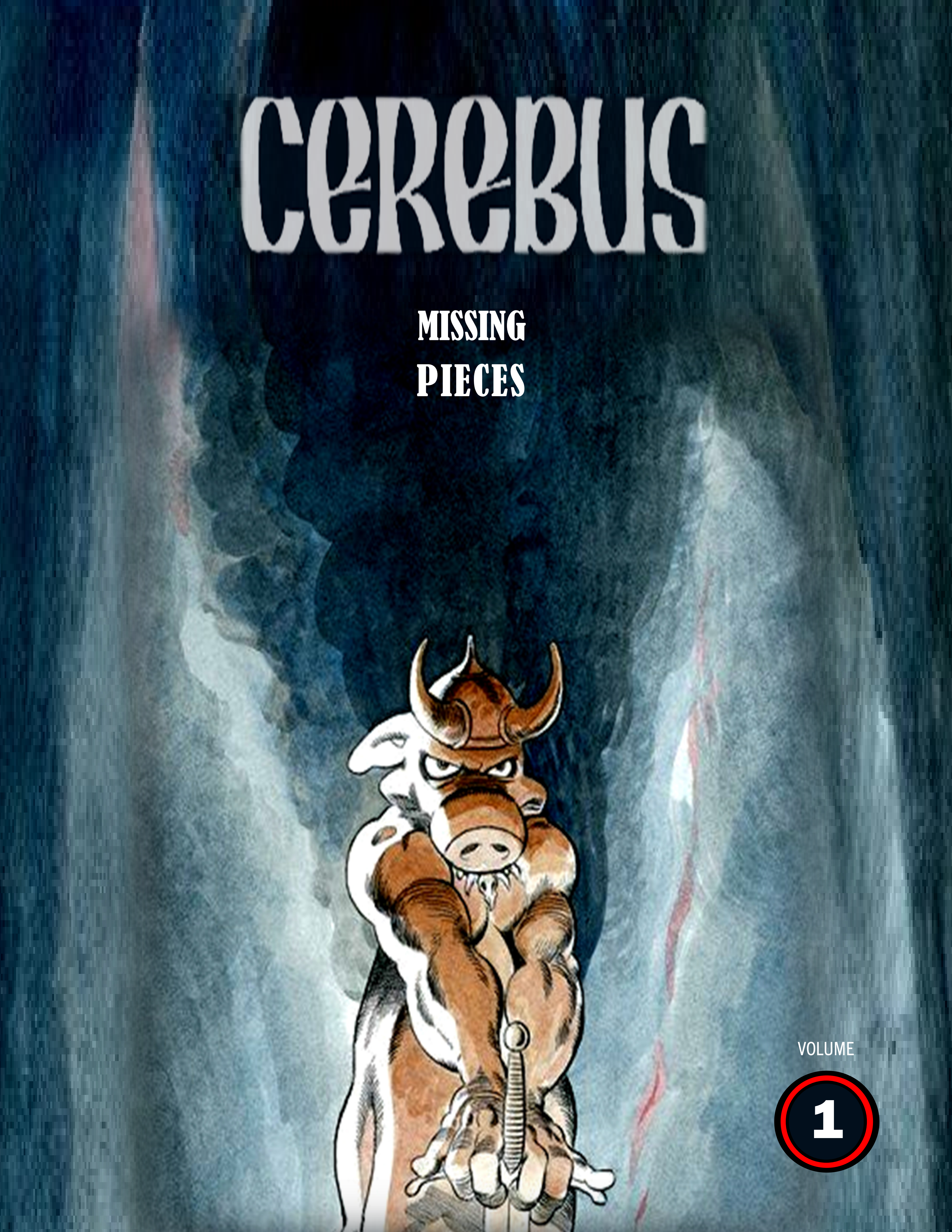
CEREBUS

MISSING PIECES

VOLUME 1



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Aardvark-Vanaheim Publishing, Kitchener Ontario

CEREBUS:
THE MISSING PIECES

VOLUME ONE

SPANNING
CEREBUS ISSUES 1-50
DECEMBER 1977-
MAY 1983

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FIRST EDITION

APRIL 2026

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CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

This volume contains all covers, *Aardvark Comment* letter pages, the “Unique Stories” features, introductions, “Aardvarkian Age” backups, and *Note From The Publisher* editorials from the first fifty issues of *Cerebus*, *Cerebus Bi-Weekly*, *High Society Bi-Weekly*, and *Swords of Cerebus*.

“The Single Page” backup comics from the *Bi-Weekly* reprints have been included only if they contain references to Dave Sim or Cerebus. (Ditto with advertisements; I have only included the ads that referenced Sim or Cerebus, or were otherwise historically significant.)

As the title indicates, this series serves to compile all the “missing pieces” of the original issues that are not included in the phonebook reprints, so that those who have only collected the series in trade paperback format are not missing out on the broader tableau that is Cerebus. This series will continue until all of the missing elements of the complete 300 issue run are compiled.

So as to not interrupt the flow of the presentation, this volume’s page numbers have been inserted only on *Note From The Publisher* pages.

If you’re looking for the uncollected stories from *Swords of Cerebus* or any of the various guest appearances in other titles, please seek out **Cerebus: Miscellany**. *Missing Pieces* will only collect material from the monthly series and subsequent reprints of the monthly series.

If you enjoy this work, please donate to Dave Sim’s artist fund directly via his website at **cerebusdownloads.com**. Share this title with Cerebus fandom worldwide, but do not buy or sell it.

Hisses,

A Blake Jockley

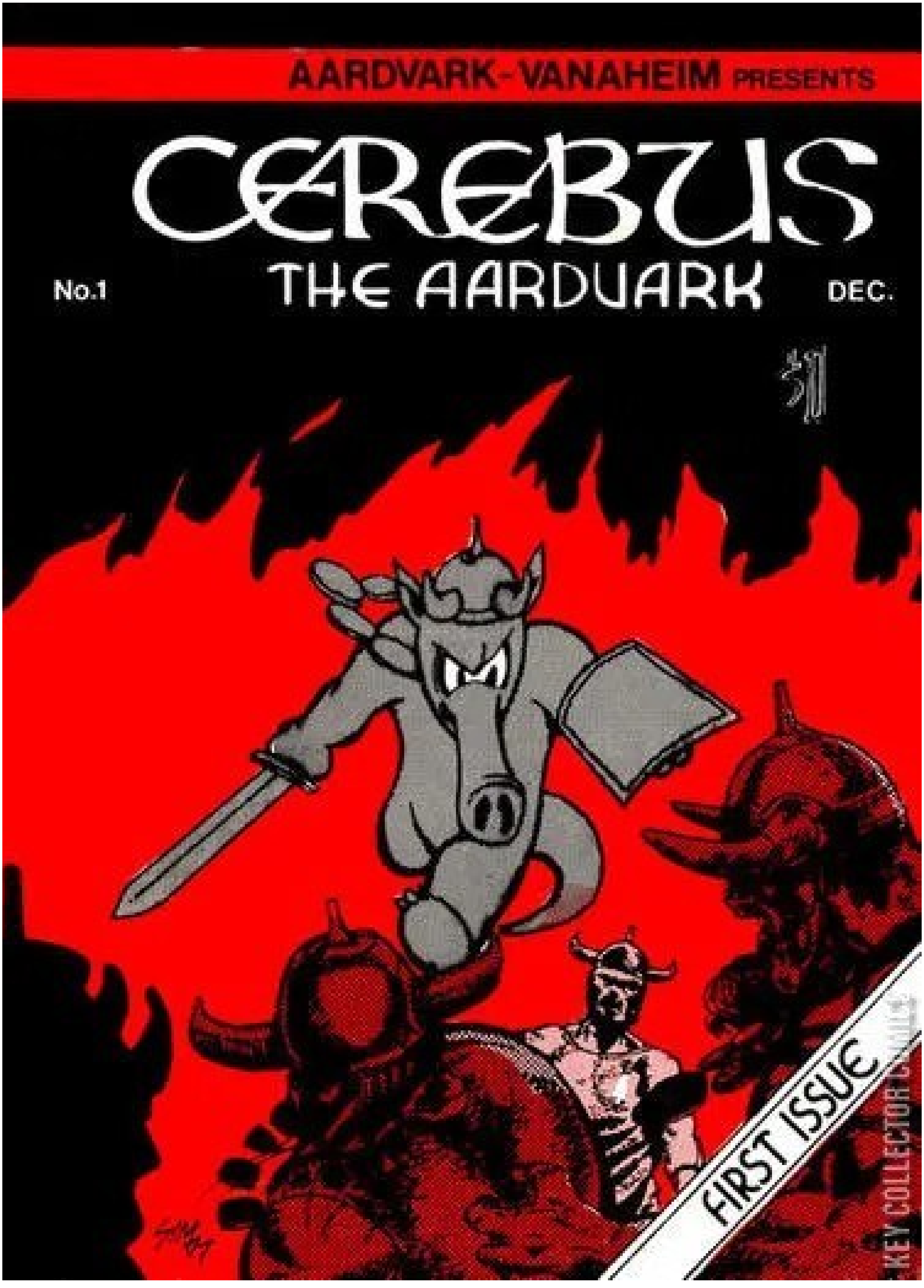
A. Blake Jockley,

Publisheroach

REMASTERED EDITION

DAVE SIM

CEREBUS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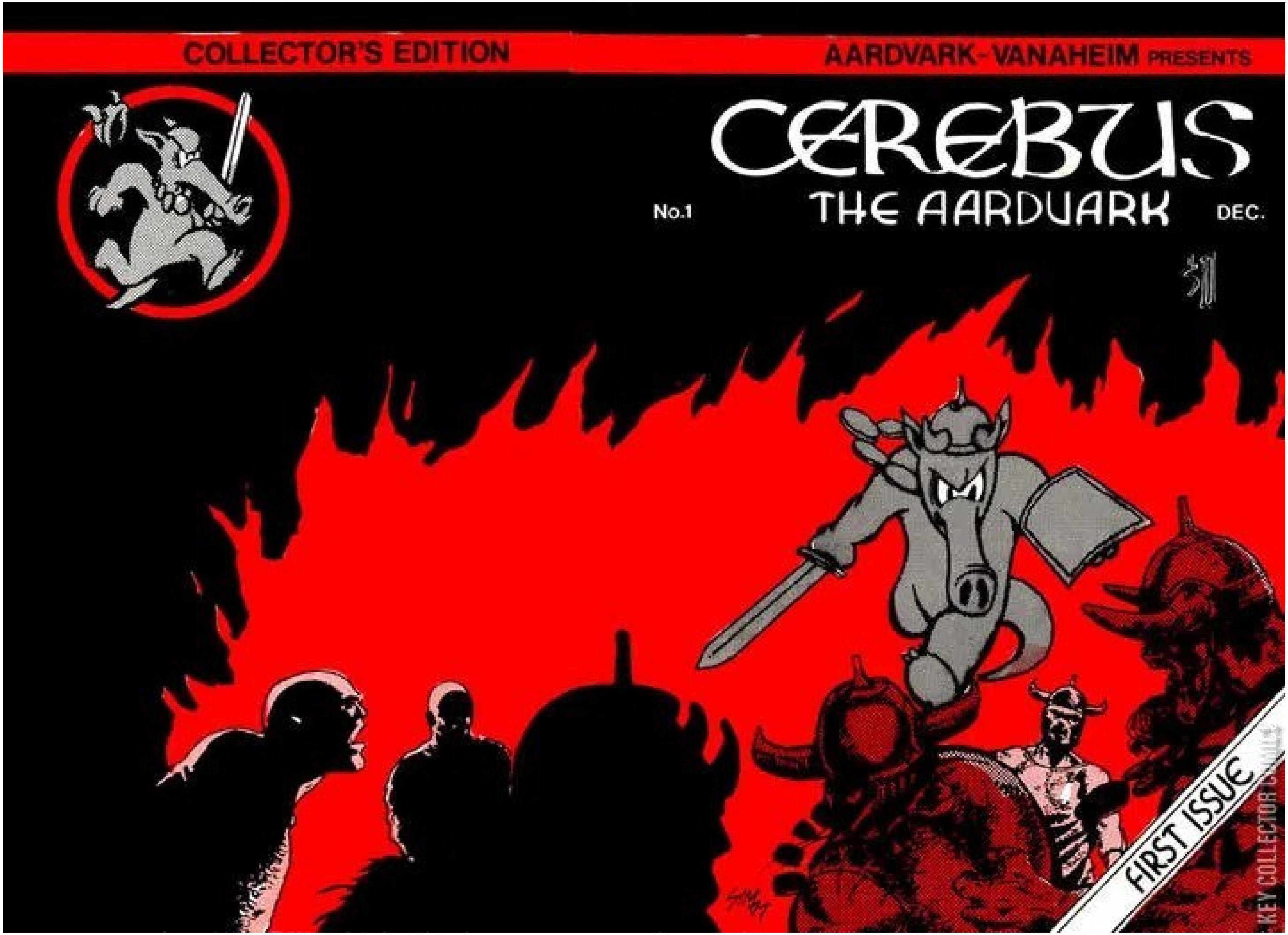
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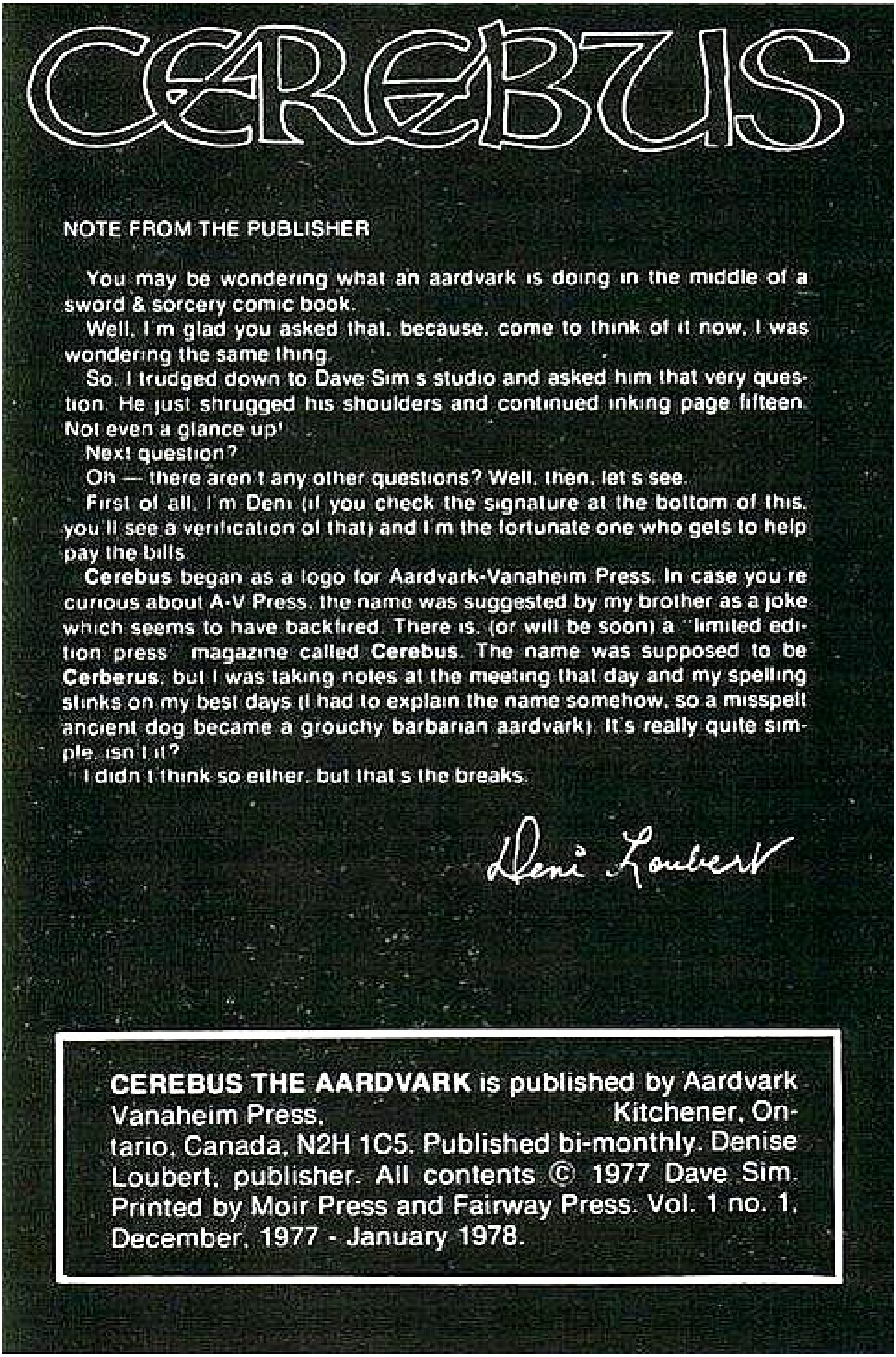


CEREBUS

NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

You may be wondering what an aardvark is doing in the middle of a sword & sorcery comic book.

Well, I'm glad you asked that, because, come to think of it now, I was wondering the same thing.

So, I trudged down to Dave Sim's studio and asked him that very question. He just shrugged his shoulders and continued inking page fifteen. Not even a glance up!

Next question?

Oh — there aren't any other questions? Well, then, let's see.

First of all, I'm Deni (if you check the signature at the bottom of this, you'll see a verification of that) and I'm the fortunate one who gets to help pay the bills.

Cerebus began as a logo for Aardvark-Vanaheim Press. In case you're curious about A-V Press, the name was suggested by my brother as a joke which seems to have backfired. There is, (or will be soon) a "limited edition press" magazine called **Cerebus**. The name was supposed to be **Cerberus**, but I was taking notes at the meeting that day and my spelling stinks on my best days (I had to explain the name somehow, so a misspelt ancient dog became a grouchy barbarian aardvark). It's really quite simple, isn't it?

I didn't think so either, but that's the breaks.

Deni Loubert

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark Vanaheim Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2H 1C5. Published bi-monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents © 1977 Dave Sim. Printed by Moir Press and Fairway Press. Vol. 1 no. 1, December, 1977 - January 1978.

CEREBUS No. 1 (December 1977-January 1978)

If I had known what I was letting myself in for, I probably never would have started. It was a good theory. I had just completed two whole comic books where I had done the work from start to finish; PHANTACEA #1 and REVOLT 3000 #1. On PHANTACEA I had worked from a script. On REVOLT I had done all the writing as well (it still hasn't been released by IRJAX ENTERPRISES by the way). It had been a lot of work, but I had discovered that it didn't kill me to draw more than ten pages for a given story. What was to prevent me from doing a comic book that Deni and I would publish? There was no one to pay me, I had never paid a printing bill in my life, I was virtually an unknown and we could only muster a single order for five hundred copies. We were half-way home already.

I had decided to use Cerebus the Aardvark as the title and central character for this guaranteed best-seller. In the year prior to my sitting down to pencil the first issue, I had a) met a girl named Deni who was doing a fanzine b) designed a logo for said fanzine herein known as CEREBUS (the logo is the same now as it was then) c) persuaded girl Deni that she must have a name for her publishing enterprise d) received two suggestions from girl Deni's brother Michael (Vanaheim Press) sister Karen (Aardvark Press) and e) diplomatically selected both. I proceeded f) to design a company logo featuring a cartoon aardvark (since I didn't know how to draw a Vanaheim). I then supervised the pasting up of the first issue of Cerebus the Fanzine featuring prose and art by g) Brother Michael, Boyfriend Me, Sister Karen, Head Honcho Deni, Too Tall Bob and numerous others. Printer h) rips us off for originals and payment - and Aardvark-Vanaheim Cerebus the Fanzine bites the big one.

In the course of all this, we noticed that Deni had spelled "Cerberus" incorrectly. I solved this by suggesting that Cerebus was the name of our aardvark mascot. It was a small step from this point to pencilling a page of Cerebus bouncing merrily atop a horse (yay) and sending it to Mike Friedrich as a new feature for QUACK; which he was quick to refuse (boo).

The page was just lying there and it sure beat making up a new character.

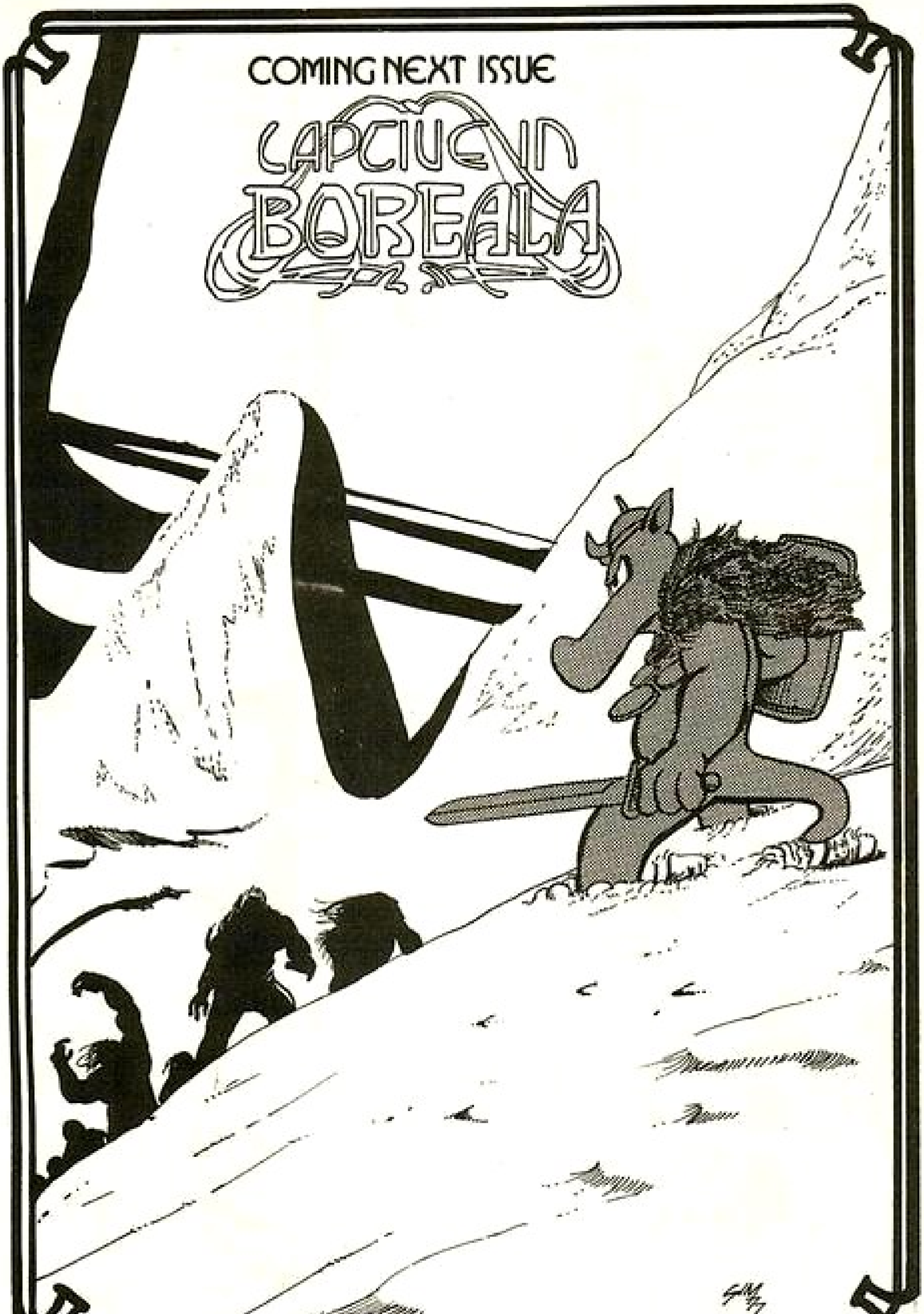
I admit to an intentional gross-out on page two, that you would not be likely to see again in the pages of Cerebus. The severed hand bit served to establish that tho this might be a cute and furry aardvark, this was also a mean and lethal aardvark. I drew the first issue the same way I have drawn each successive issue. I start at page one, pencil ink and letter it, and then go on to page two.

Which probably doesn't do a thing for you, but believe me — there are professional comic artists who absolutely bump their chins on the carpet when I tell them that I finish each page one at a time. The accepted method (y'see) in the comic book world (the graphic arts' equivalent of Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times) is to fully pencil, then fully letter, and finally ink a whole book at one time. When I consider it too carefully, I get the first indications of an ulcer brewing. If I were to try and do Cerebus that way, I'd fall apart after four issues. By the time I was pencilling the last page, I'd be indicating where the head and hands belonged and rough indications of panel borders. By the time I was lettering the last page, I'd probably be handwriting it with a felt tip pen. And of course by the time I was inking the last page, I'd probably be using a roller to spot my blacks.

Which neatly segues into the way I break down my own workload; self-induced multiple personality for fun and profit. When I start the book, I'm The Writer. The writer bitches for a week about how he never has any fun, he's tired of being funny all the time, and nobody cares about him anyhow. This is followed by a period of deep intense silence, much staring at walls, punctuated by cheery optimism on the order of; "That's it! I'm dead! I can't think of an ending!" or "I'm just going to have to scrap the first ten pages — they're lousy." Often it is less coherent than that — reduced to the more succinct, "Garbage! It's all GARBAGE!"

Eventually the plot is finished and The Penciller, Inker and Letterer all crowd into one small room and start to work. The Penciller, dreaming of nubile young groupies gathered in the street below chanting "Dave Sim! Dave Sim!" starts to rough in page one. The Penciller listens to records, the radio, takes frequent breaks for coffee and donuts, hums and generally finds as many ways as humanly possible to devote as little attention as he can get away with to the work at hand. The Penciller draws the way most people doodle. He wakes up an average of once every hour or so — just long enough to make sure Cerebus is holding his sword with his right hand. Then it's back to semi-sleep and daydreams. Unfortunately, this doesn't last forever. As soon as the Penciller is done, he falls completely comatose, which once again releases the dreaded Writer and his badly-battered stooge The Letterer. All The Letterer wants to do is fill up the available balloons, mark off the panel borders with his rapidographs and make way for the inker (who, I might add, is starting to sweat in his own little corner of my brain, trying to remember what the little blue squiggle in the corner of panel two was supposed to be). The Writer however has just decided that all the dialogue that was ready for page one is unusable tripe and (after punching all the available walls) sits down with a blue pencil to write something worthy of black ink. Eventually the Writer grumbles under his breath and vanishes and The Letterer is left to do his half hour stint of zombie work (thumb in your mouth and your mind in neutral). The Inker is the most paranoid for an obvious reason. The Writer can't come up with the right word, so he leaves it to the Penciller to make a funny picture. The Writer also interrupts the Letterer constantly to change the wording or split two balloons into three. By the time the Inker gets it, the other three are still aggravated by the gaping flaws in their own contributions. It soon becomes apparent that the Inker is not Mr. Fix-it. As a direct consequence, the Inker is limited in his dialogue with the other parts of my brain. Bon mots like "Oh yeah?" — I'd like to see you do any better." "Is this circle with the two dots supposed to be a Face?" and when each page is finished, it is the inker who has the last word;

"Fuckit. Nobody will know the difference anyway."


COMING NEXT ISSUE
CAPTIVE IN BOREALA

AARDVARK COMMENT

c/o AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, KITCHENER, ONT. N2H 1C5

This is the first issue of **Cerebus the Aardvark**, so, by necessity, there are no letters in this letters column.

That is one of the most bothersome things about producing a first issue of a comic book. No feedback. Primarily, you are producing your product in the dark. You have no idea whether it is going to succeed or fail. You look around at all the other publications similar to yours and mark the differences as pluses and minuses in the hopes that the equation will work out, that you have figured correctly, and that the market is just right for the type of comic book you are about to introduce.

There is a resurgence, at the moment, in Canadian comic books. There is also a big demand for sword and sorcery and for funny animal books. It would be nice if combining a few successful formats naturally led to success in sales figures. Alas, as witness Atlas Comics, such is not the case.

Cerebus is not really as formulated as all that. The character emerged from the symbol I had drawn for Aardvark Vanaheim Press. There was no burst of divine light, no sudden revelation that this was a "natural", that what I had drawn was a sure-fire "seller". If the truth be known, I had had the idea of doing a **Cerebus** comic book story for six months before I considered putting pencil to paper. I had found that it is one thing to work for other publishers, to decry their stupidity, to denounce their short-sightedness and their penchant for "missing the boat" on new ideas and concepts. It is quite another to put together a book of your own from scratch with only a handful of reactions as each page is inked and the tone applied.

Nail-biting time.

A major problem when it comes to publishing your own comic book is format. In the case of **Cerebus**, it is a risky venture, because it is only twenty-four pages long. Will it sell at twenty-four pages? It has a colour cover on coated stock. Would it have sold better at forty pages with a black and white cover printed on newsprint?

You see the problems.

There is a recurring feeling as you work toward the finished product that the slightest miscalculation in format and design is going to land you in the poorhouse with thousands of dusty copies of your first issue.

Which brings me to the point of this semi-editorial. You bought this comic book. And so, we thank you and we want to let you know that, if there is a second issue (planned for February 1978) that it was largely because of you. If you bought this comic (and especially if you got a free one) we are looking for your comments. We think that you might be far enough removed from our publishing headaches to point out what we are doing wrong (or right) and we hope you will do just that. By writing a letter to "Aardvark Comment".

We'll even print as many of them as we can.

Because that's what this column is for.

Other Canadian comic books available:

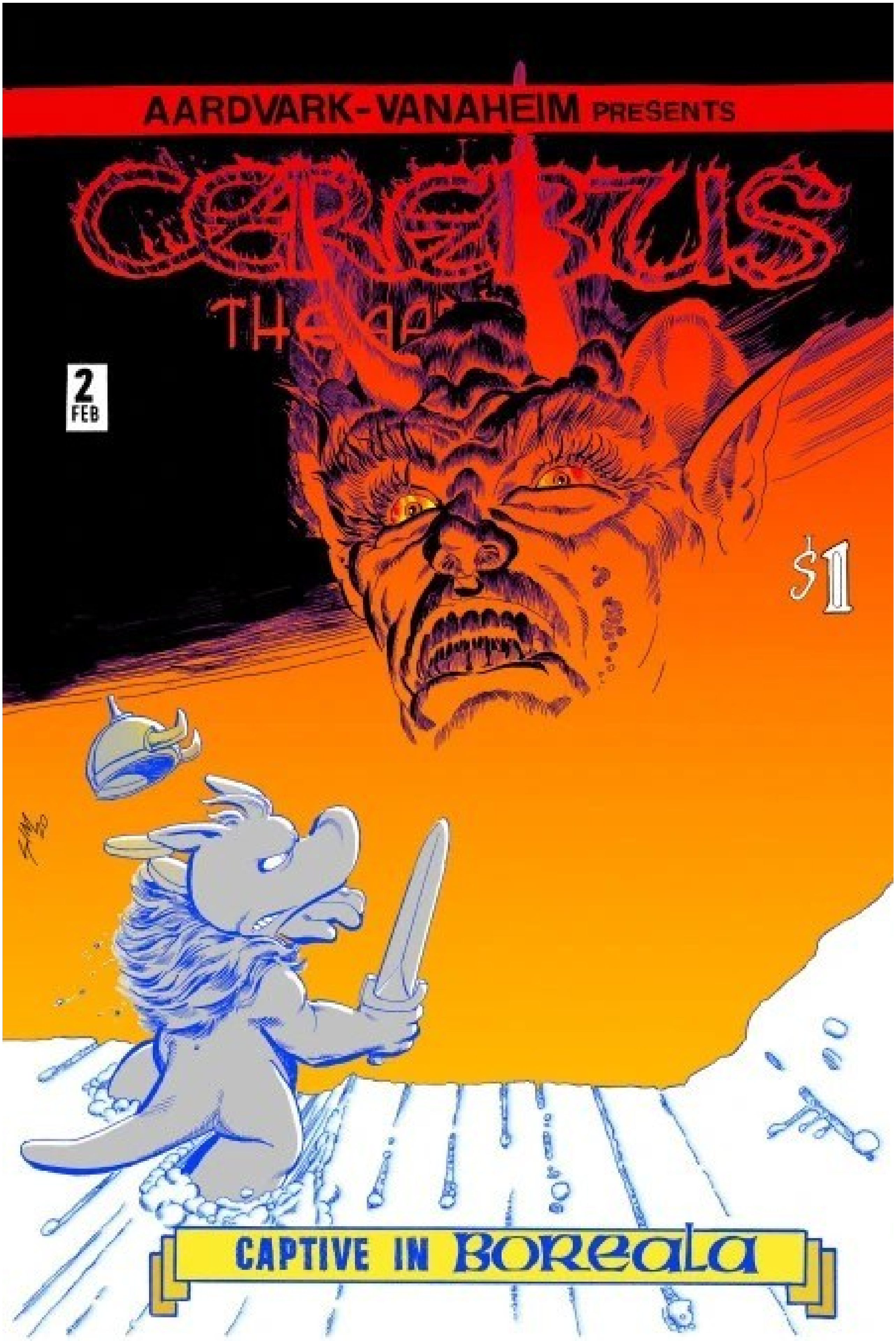
Arik Khan #1 Excellent comic book featuring art by Franc Reyes and dialogue by bp Nichol. Order from Andromeda Publications,
Toronto, Ontario M5V 2A9

PHANTACEA #1 Super-hero comic book featuring Baron Justice and art by Dave Sim. All orders to Jim McPherson,
St., Vancouver,
B.C. V6R 3K2

FOG CITY COMICS #1 funny animal comic featuring art by Rand Holmes. Order from STAMPART,
Bentall Stn., Vancouver B.C.
V7X 1A2

OKTOBERFEST #1 copies still available of this comic published in 1976. Art by Dave Sim and Gene Day. Order from Now & Then Books,
Kitchener, Ontario

all comic books are 1.00 plus .25 postage.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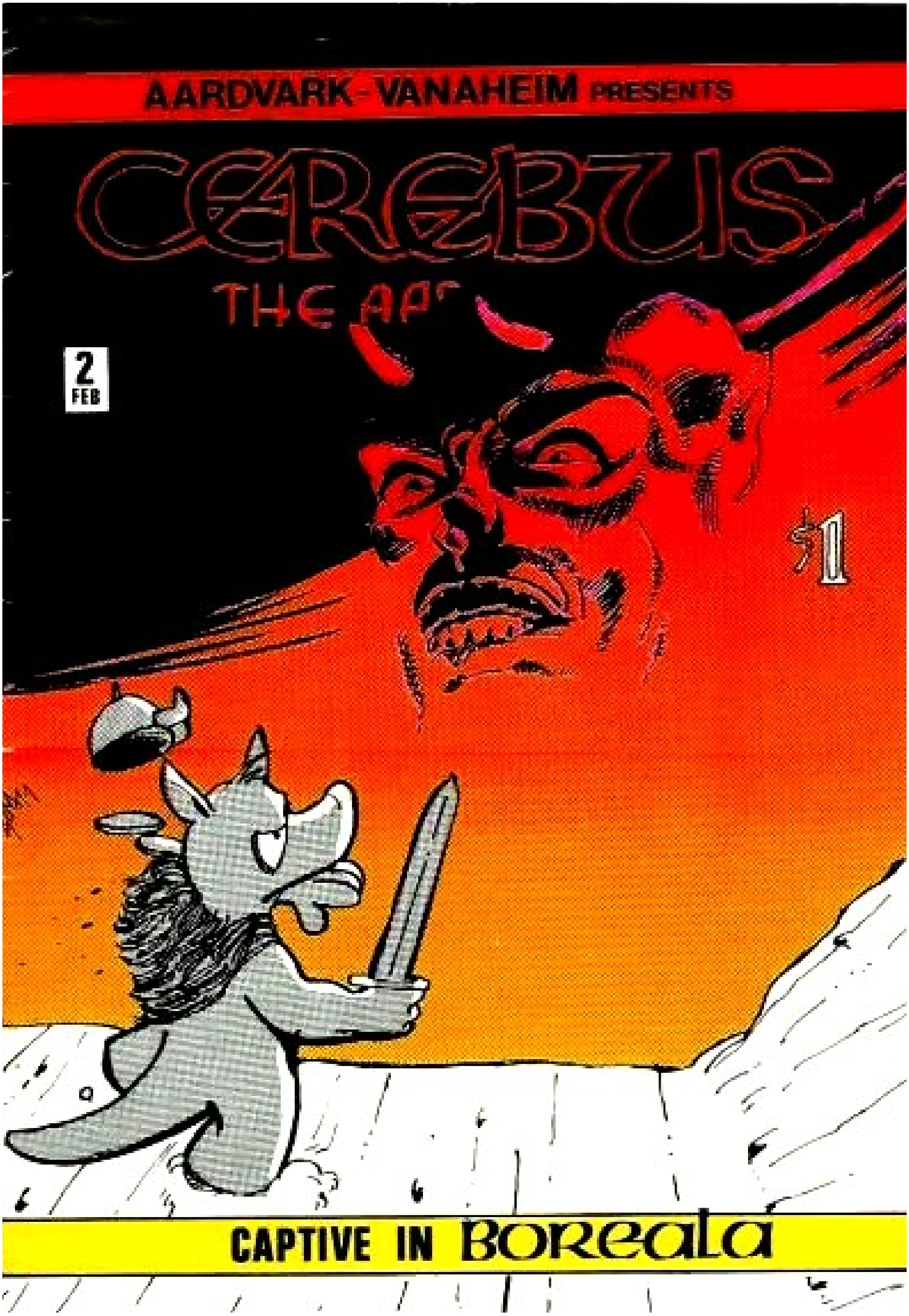
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CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

In the beginning, it all seemed so simple.

Dave and I had talked over the concept, and I agreed to "be the publisher" through the fact that I could give financial and moral support when needed.

When did we ever mention conventions, though? Somehow, I never stopped to think that I'd have to introduce myself to total strangers, extolling the virtues of this comic book.

Luckily, I haven't had to push CEREBUS too hard. I've been amazed to find out that it can sell itself. But I do still have to make long-distance phone calls to insure delivery dates.

Despite the fact that I complain about it, I do enjoy meeting all these people, though. Comic book people, both the fans and the dealers selling the comics, are colourful in their own special way. For instance, on the way home from a convention in Toronto (where I was introducing CEREBUS to as many dealers as would listen to me) we stopped off at a restaurant to eat.

Now this isn't just three or four fans. This is a whole vanload of fans and dealers who have just had a full day of looking at and comparing comic books. We descended on that restaurant, hungry, tired and energetic as hell about comics. There were only a few other people in the restaurant at the time, and I fear they will never be the same. Gesturing wildly, and talking loudly about Road Runner cartoons and the various merits of different artists, we more than filled the place. At one point, I just had to sit back and take a good look at the scene. There was no way we could be ignored, and yet everyone there was too busy being caught up in his or her enthusiasm to notice that we were being a three ring circus for the benefit of those few patrons there.

Comics is a crazy business, but you know something? I wouldn't want to be anyplace else. That is if I had a choice. Which none of us do once the bug has bitten.

Deni Loubert

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark Vanaheim Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2H 1C5. Published bi-monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents c 1978 Dave Sim. Printed by Moir Press and Fairway Press. Vol. 1 No. 2, February-March, 1978.

CEREBUS NO. 2 (February, March, 1978)

So there was one problem with Cerebus' first issue not being a total disaster; I now had to draw the second one.

On the preview page (which was scrapped with issue #7) of the first issue, I had drawn Cerebus wearing fur and standing on a snowy slope while a number of indistinct shapes moved menacingly towards him (as menacingly as indistinct shapes can move, anyway). I like the way Barry Smith drew the snow in "Frost Giant's Daughter" and (as I haven't mentioned yet) the name of the game at this time was "Look as much like Barry Smith as possible.' Short of developing a mid-Atlantic accent (half New York, half London) I was doing my level best, and ripping off the two-page splash to "Frost Giant's" looked like a good bet to get the second issue off to a roaring start.

So sue me.

The Writer panicked when he realized he was going to have to come up with some more ha-ha. The Writer wasn't really enthusiastic about getting stuck with a job that entailed making up twenty-two pages of ha-ha every other month. His was a neat solution. Drop the ha-ha for the last thirteen pages of the second issue. I said it was a **neat** solution - I didn't say it was a **smart** solution. That presented him with a problem, though, in that the Penciller thought that it was a good idea to have ha-ha in **every** issue, right through to the end. A slightly more objective opinion, stemming from the fact that ha-ha is no more difficult to draw than industrial-strength serious.

So the Penciller beat the Writer into submission and the Writer crawled off, tail between his legs, to write twelve pages of dialogue that would have Mel Brooks clutching his sides, right?

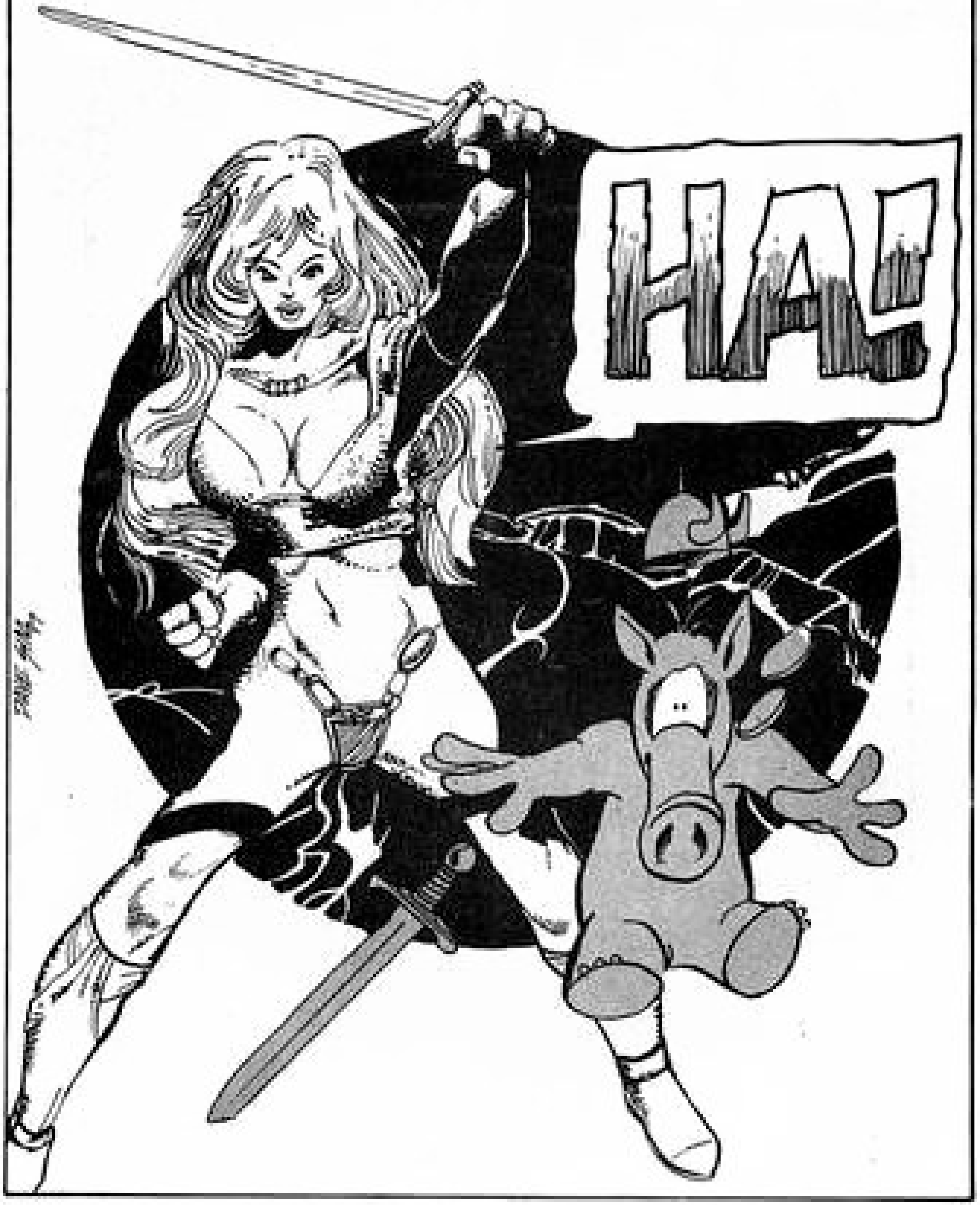
Nonsense. The Writer was smart enough to see that the Penciller and the Inker could be bought off. No fool he.

Maybe there was no difference between drawing ha-ha and drawing high-power serious, but there was a BIG difference between drawing twelve pages of buildings and people and snow and drawing twelve pages of Cerebus and rocks.

The Penciller and the Inker looked at each other, eyebrows raised and silly grins on their faces. The Writer had struck paydirt. He didn't have to write jokes and they didn't have to draw Barry Smith people and buildings for two weeks.

The Letterer was disgusted, but that's only because his workload stayed the same.

NEXT ISSUE



SONG OF RED SOPHIA

AARDVARK COMMENT

c/o AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, 48 WEBER ST. E., KITCHENER, ONT. N2H 1C5

Dear Dave:
Cerebus is the **best** thing I've seen of yours . . . a very successful parody of the genre and a difficult thing to pull off. Your irascible aardvark works perfectly in the context of the book. Blacks are solid, well-placed. The technique over-all was splendid. Nice story-telling.
Frank Thorne
Scotch Plains, N.J.

And to those doubters out there who figure I made this one up, I draw their attention to the dynamic rendering below which Mr. Thorne was kind enough to enclose. And which, I might hasten to add, now hangs proudly next to my drawing board.

Dear Aardvarks:
Congratulations on a nice looking first issue. Cerebus is the most interesting funny animal since Howard (whatayamean Howard who? You know who I mean). Seriously, your parody was great — and is it just my imagination or does it read like Robert E. Howard's "Tower of the Elephant"? Clovis' Beard — when's the next issue coming out?
Ed Coates
Marchment, Texas

This is the second comment I've had on Cerebus one's similarity to "Tower of the Elephant". I can remember reading the story a long time ago and I guess elements stuck in the back of my mind. Glad you asked about next issue — it is available April 1st from Jim Friel, 130 E. Kilborn St., Lansing, Michigan, 48906 or Harry Kremer, 103 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ontario.

Dear Deni and Dave:
Enjoyed your first issue of Cerebus — but I have a question. Who the heck is Clovis?
Tom Richards,
Niagara Falls, Ontario

Clovis is the pen name of Deni's brother, the noted sword and sorcery writer. Why Cerebus swears an oath to a noted sword and sorcery writer is a mystery best left to the ages.

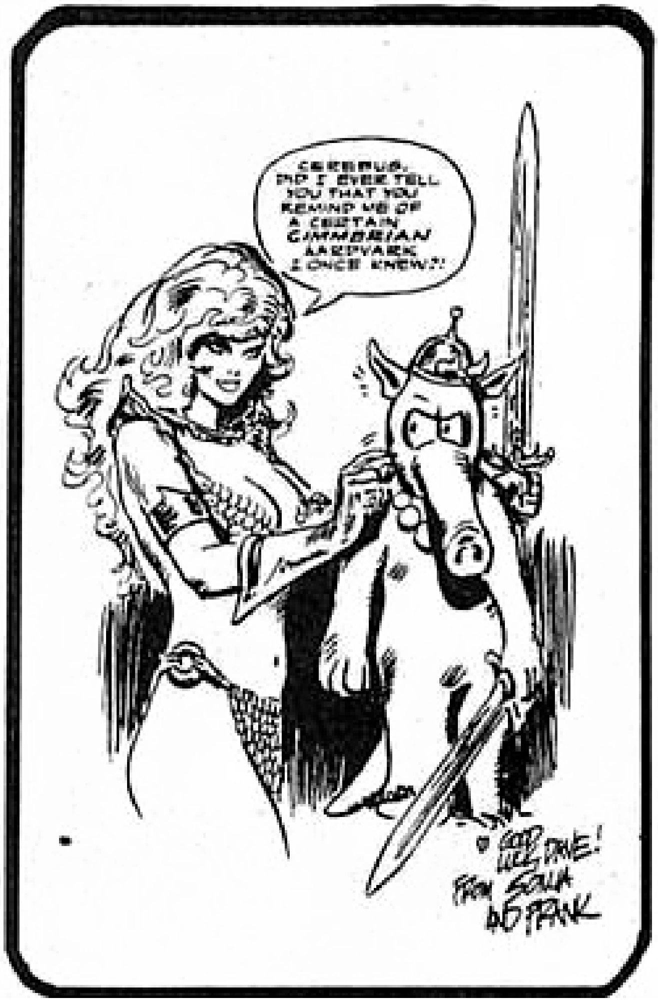
Dear Cerebus:
All in all, a good first issue. I thought the plot was very good on the whole, and there were a couple of places that were really excellent, like 1) the splash panel 2) the wizard who was getting too old 3) the freak-out scene 4) Cerebus cutting in on the thief to inform him all he had was a walnut. Cerebus doesn't seem to be able to be hurt by sword (battle with the skeleton) or sorcery (the wizard and shadow beast), but how would he stand up against a bewitching female?
Arthur Graham,
Edmonton, Alberta

On his tippy-toes. Seriously, Cerebus does his stuff bewitching female-wise in next issue's "Song of Red Sophia" which will be available April 1st.

Dear Dave:
Cerebus is weak in immediate appearance as a comic book, and $1.00 seems too much . . . but I really enjoy your work, so my judgement doesn't count. Your "death of the Shadow-beast" is a piece of comic-genius. I would like to see Cerebus spied upon by this shadow-beast, the shadow beast hiding in his own shadow and the shadow beast taking on other forms. I really enjoyed how Cerebus killed the wizard, with eyes closed and the end was nice.
The story seems a lot like Ray Harryhausen/Charles Schneer's **7th Voyage of Sinbad**. Sinbad battled the evil-magician Koura's skeleton — that toppled over a high stair-well. And a large dragon stood in the entrance cave as Sinbad walked by.
I hope Cerebus is a great success. It occurs to me that Cerebus is great material for cartoon animation.
Bruce Shane
9312 19th Ave., No. 204
Adelphi, Md. 20783

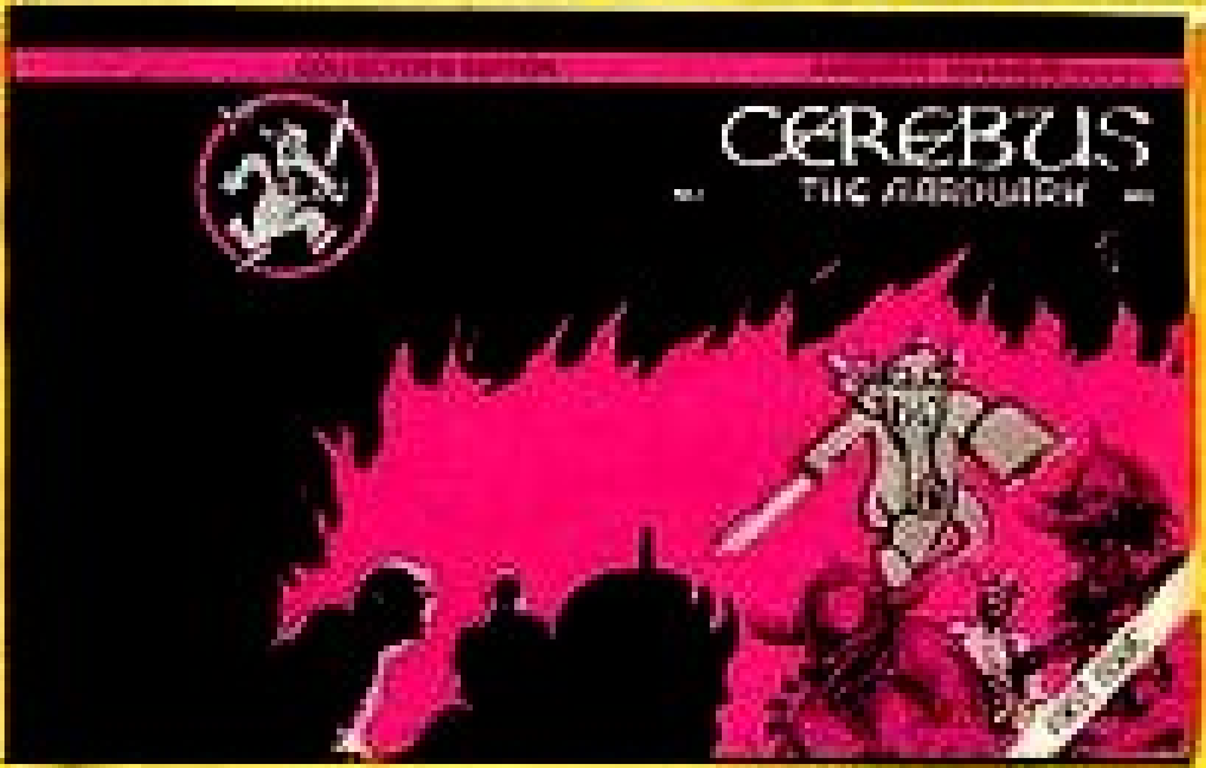
Bruce Shane is editor and publisher of a fanzine called READER WRITTEN COMICS. Interested parties can get a sample copy for $.60 from RWC, Box 1606, Hyattsville, Md., 20788

LATE NEWS: Cerebus fans on the U.S. East Coast now have their own outlet for CEREBUS THE AARDVARK. You can order copies from SEA GATE DISTRIBUTORS, Box 177, Coney Island Station, BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11224. Tell him an aardvark sent you.


CEREBUS, DID I EVER TELL YOU THAT YOU REMIND ME OF A CERTAIN CIMMERIAN AARDVARK I ONCE KNEW?!
GOOD LUCK DAVE! FROM SONJA AND FRANK

aardvark stuff

CEREBUS no.1


COLLECTOR'S EDITION
CEREBUS
THE AARDVARK

Small quantities of **CEREBUS THE AARDVARK NO. 1** are still available. Featuring the first adventure of the untamed Earth-pig as he seeks the Flame Jewel battling sword and sorcery, this collector's edition will not last long. Only $1.25.

I'm a
BEAVERS

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THE BEAVERS stars of **QUACK**, **OKTOBERFEST** and their own newspaper strip are now available on this 2" two colour button. Only $1.00

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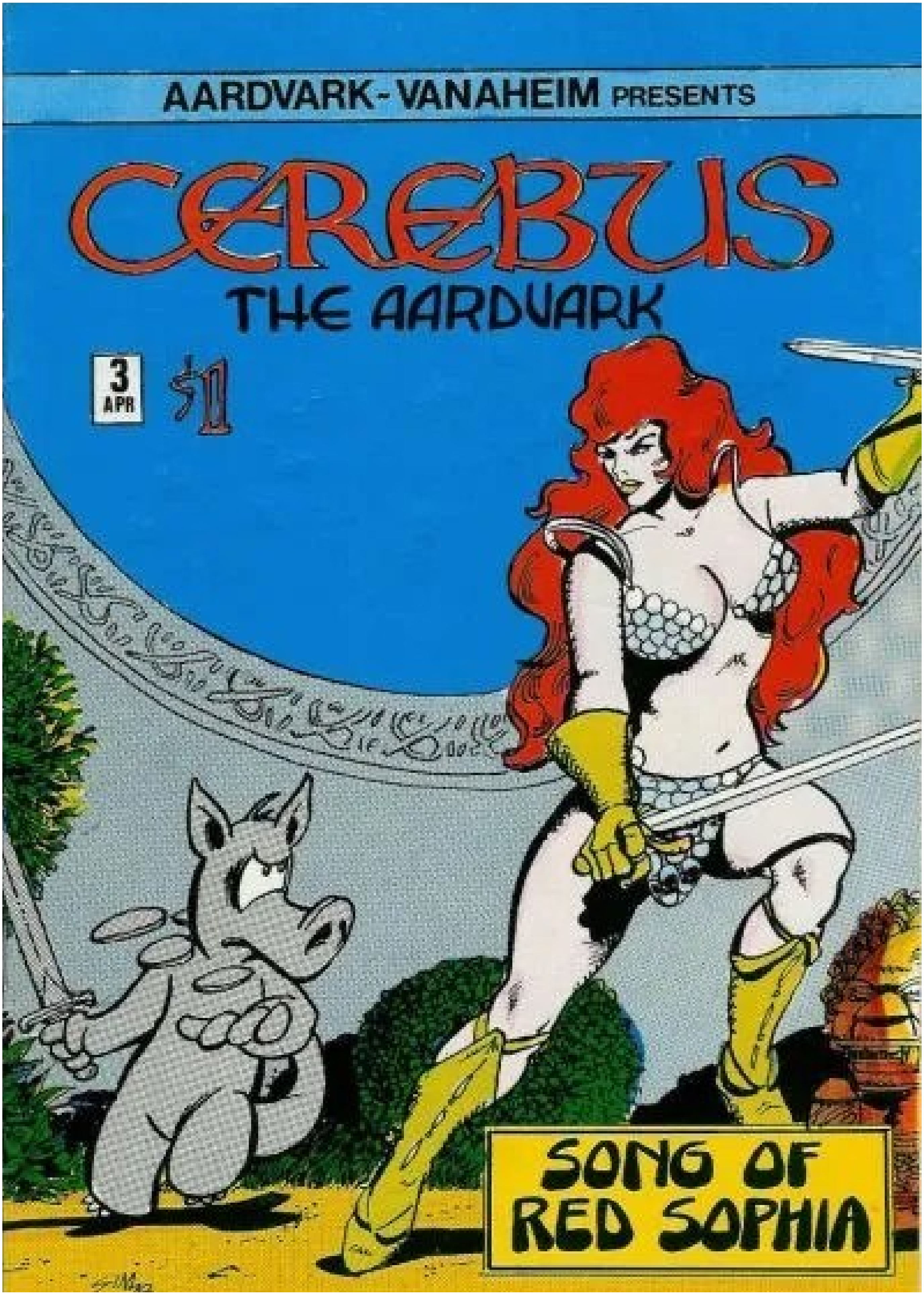
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SONG OF
RED SOPHIA

CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

This is discouraging to say, but I really have very little to talk about in this issue. The work has gone smoothly, orders have come in in very nice amounts, and all in all nothing out of the ordinary has happened between the last issue and this except (of course) that this issue has gotten done.

There was no historic struggle for ideas, as Dave had wanted to do a story where Cerebus was with a female since the inception of this comic. How he would handle it was easy once the second issue was finished, and we knew Cerebus a bit better.

To be truthful, I've had little to do with Cerebus this issue. My own job, at a printing company (working camera), keeps me busy as I am quite interested in printing and photography. But luckily I never fall behind in the adventures of Cerebus, as Dave and I are engaged (you know, to be married, like) and we live together. So it's almost like reading the daily funnies. Dave does a page at night (that's what I get for finding myself a nighthawk) and leaves it out on the breakfast table for me the next morning. Who could ask for better service?

For someone who had nothing to say, I'm doing all right. But I know that you will enjoy this issue's story much more than my ramblings, so please, don't let me hold you back.

I can promise you'll be back for more.

Deni Loubert

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark Vanaheim Press,
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bi-monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher.
All contents c 1978 Dave Sim.
Printed by Moir Press and Fairway Press. Vol. 1 No. 3, April-May, 1978.

CEREBUS NO. 3 (April, May, 1978)

"We'll put out three issues and if it doesn't go so good, we can always back out and I'll have three sample issues of a comic book when I look for work."

By the time the third issue came out, we had pretty much committed ourselves to the task of putting out a bi-monthly comic. I had decided when I finished issue #2 that I would do a Red Sonja parody in issue #3. This was largely because of Frank Thorne.

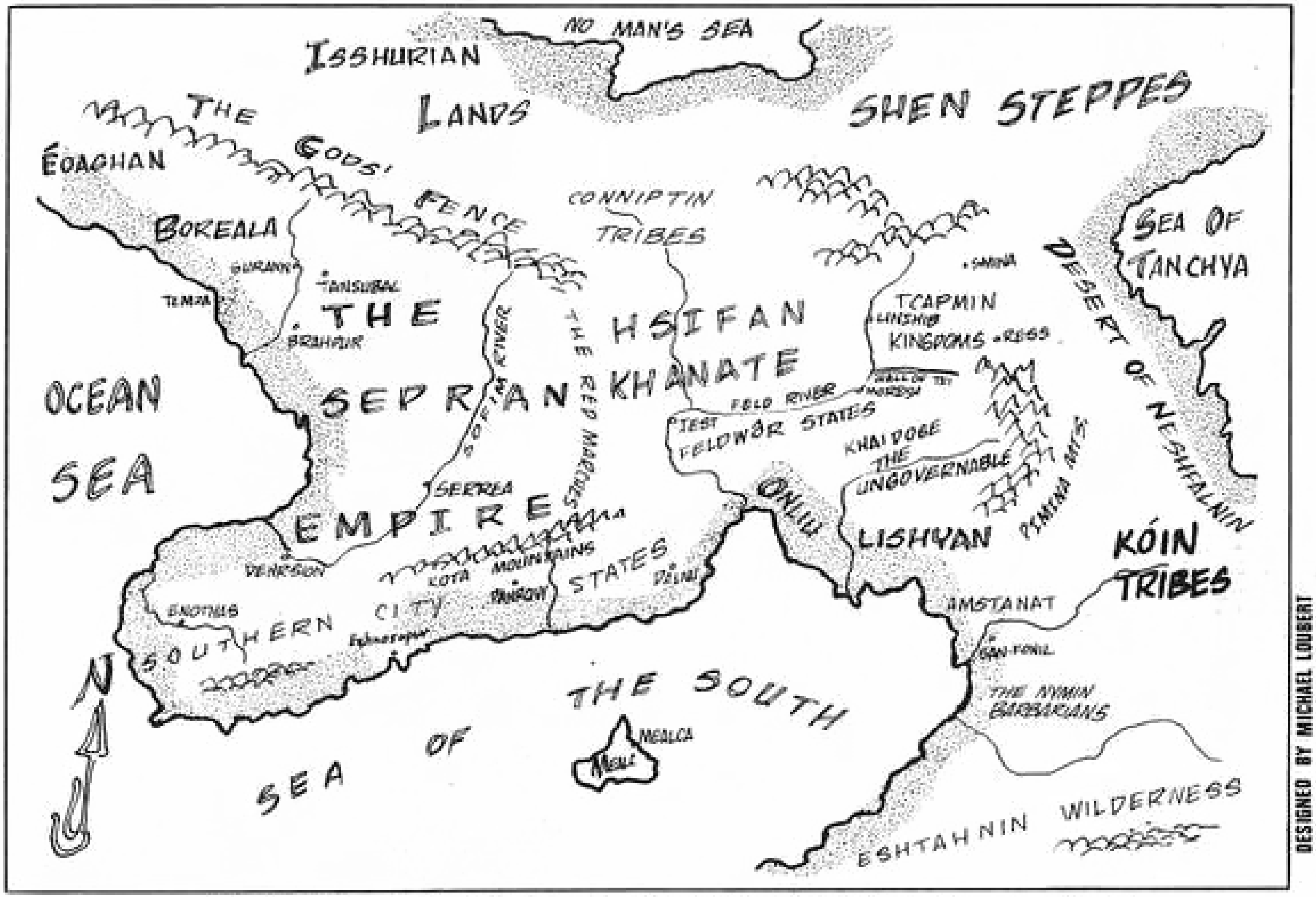
A lot of you may not know Frank very well. I don't know Frank Thorne very well myself. When I was a fan Frank sent me an original of his Dr. Guy Bennet strip. Frank also used to write really regular. Drop a dear Frank letter in the mailbox and a week later you can count on a handwritten Frank Thorne reply. Write a dear Dave letter and mail it and you can count on a handwritten Dave Sim reply sometime after hell freezes over.

A struggling professional **needs** Frank Thorne - be they elf or aardvark. I mean, Frank loves everything ... without qualification or inhibition. Phone the guy to talk and he laughs. He laughs when you say hello, he laughs when you ask him if he's rich yet. He laughs when you tell him you haven't got money for groceries and your mother needs an operation (this last part is made up of course). Frank sends you sketches. Bizarre little Pantone and flair jobbies. I got a sketch when I sent him issue #1. I got a sketch when I sent him #3, I got a cover for #7 just for sending him xeroxes of the first ten pages. I got another sketch when I won the Alley Award. The most recent sketch was for the Ghita parody in #19. I still have to do Son of Tomahawk, Mighty Sampson and Dr. Guy Bennet (who?). By the end of the decade, I'll be able to wallpaper the cat's room with Frank Thorne artwork.

Of course I ran into problems at the time, I was trying to do Frank Thorne's Sonja, inked like Barry Smith does, only more hair and aw nuts it doesn't look like anything.

The granola page was the first time I cracked myself up over one of my own jokes, page two's backgrounds were copied out of a very slim volume of Art Nouveau objay dar, and yes, it is true, the wizard was drawn so he looked like Frank.

I wonder if I'll get a sketch for this introduction?


NO MAN'S SEA
ISSHURIAN
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SAN-TONIL
THE NYMIN
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N
THE SOUTH
SEA OF
MEALCA
MEALI
ESHTAHNIN WILDERNESS

DESIGNED BY MICHAEL LOUBERT

THE AARDUARKIAN AGE

AARDVARK COMMENT

c/o AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, KITCHENER, ONT. N2H 1C5

Dear Aardvarks:

Your first production comic book from Aardvark-Vanaheim was true-Canadian wondabar work. I congratulate you on your efforts and I will follow Aardvark Vanaheim on everything. Good luck for super success.

When I first opened the envelope and took out the copy, my first impression was TERRIFIC, a CANADIAN comic book, just what this country needs. It's great to read something Canadian that's not about Levesque and his independance indigestion. I've heard enough about that to kill a herd of cattle.

Now onto the mag itself. The wraparound cover was simple, but sassy. The only complaint was no mention of the Canadian content.

The story and artwork of Dave Sim was nothing short of spectacular. The mixture of funny animal and sword and sorcery concepts led to an enjoyable book.

The format of the book is disputable. At the current size, I do not believe the book would succeed on the newsstand. It would be better and more to my liking to have black and white paper covers and 40 pages saving the wraparound glossy colour covers for special issues. All in all you have a good magazine on your hands and I'll be along all the way, so tell me if Cerebus and Aardvark Vanaheim are to continue.

Kenny Willis Jr.,
726 Cooper Street,
Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

They certainly are! It is our belief that the quality of Cerebus should speak for itself. Canadians can take heart that their country is capable of producing a solid competitive product. At the moment, however, A-V PRESS has only indistinct plans for producing comic books exclusively for Canadian markets.

Dear Dave:

Many thanks for the CEREBUS. I enjoyed it very much and think you have a real winner. Once again you have displayed your stylistic versatility in the Smith vein.

The story was very funny — in the same sort of vein as HOWARD THE DUCK but much better. An aardvark is also a very visually interesting character. I think you're making a mistake if you confine Cerebus to sword and sorcery alone.

The advantage of funny animal characters is their flexibility.

They can fit into any format. My suggestion for a Cerebus story might be a space opera kind of thing a la Flash Gordon/Star Wars.

I really think Cerebus is your best work yet and should be seen by the powers at Marvel and DC.

Terry Hamilton,
PO Box 48385,
Bentall Stn. Vancouver

Terry Hamilton is the very successful publisher of the STAMPART comic books being produced in Vancouver, including FOG CITY COMICS, a highly sophisticated funny animal book.

Dear Dave & Deni:

Cerebus No. 1 was excellent. The story left a little to be desired, but the art was well above Dave's usual level of excellence. Try and develop Cerebus' "personality" more.

His gruff attitude doesn't seem to fit an earth pig exactly. All in all it was very enjoyable and I look forward to No. 2.

Russ A. Stamets,
16430 Kimbark,
South Holland Ill.,
60473

Efforts are being made to establish more clearly the "personality" that reader Stamets refers to. Aardvark fans can look forward to a clearer idea of the Earth Pig's manners and motivations in future issues. We also hope that this issue's story will give readers some clues as to the untamed Earth Pig's motivations.

Dear Deni:

Cerebus No. 1 arrived this morning and I've got to admit that I've had fun reading and looking through it. You had some nice art there. Dave sure knows how to spot his blacks. The pages seemed pretty well balanced. Fairly good layout, too.

The only thing that bothered me was Dave's rendering of the people. He seemed a little out of practice with the human form, but what the hey. The people in the rear of the book were looking better than in the beginning of the thing (and I'm gonna have egg on my face if you tell me that Dave started drawing the last page first).

The writing was nicely handled. Make Cerebus a man and you'd have a pretty fair barbarian story. But I like the idea of the main character being a 'vark. He may be a cute lookin' furry beast but he's one bad dude.

Best of luck with everything, and I hope you get filthy rich.

John Ellis Sech,
RT. 4 Box 4-23,
Canters Cave Twp. Rd. 223,
Jackson, Ohio 45640

Long time Canadian comics fans will recall John Sech's scripting on Vince Marchesano's THE DARK NINJA in the short-lived ORB magazine. Short time Canadian comics fans won't know him from Adam, I guess.

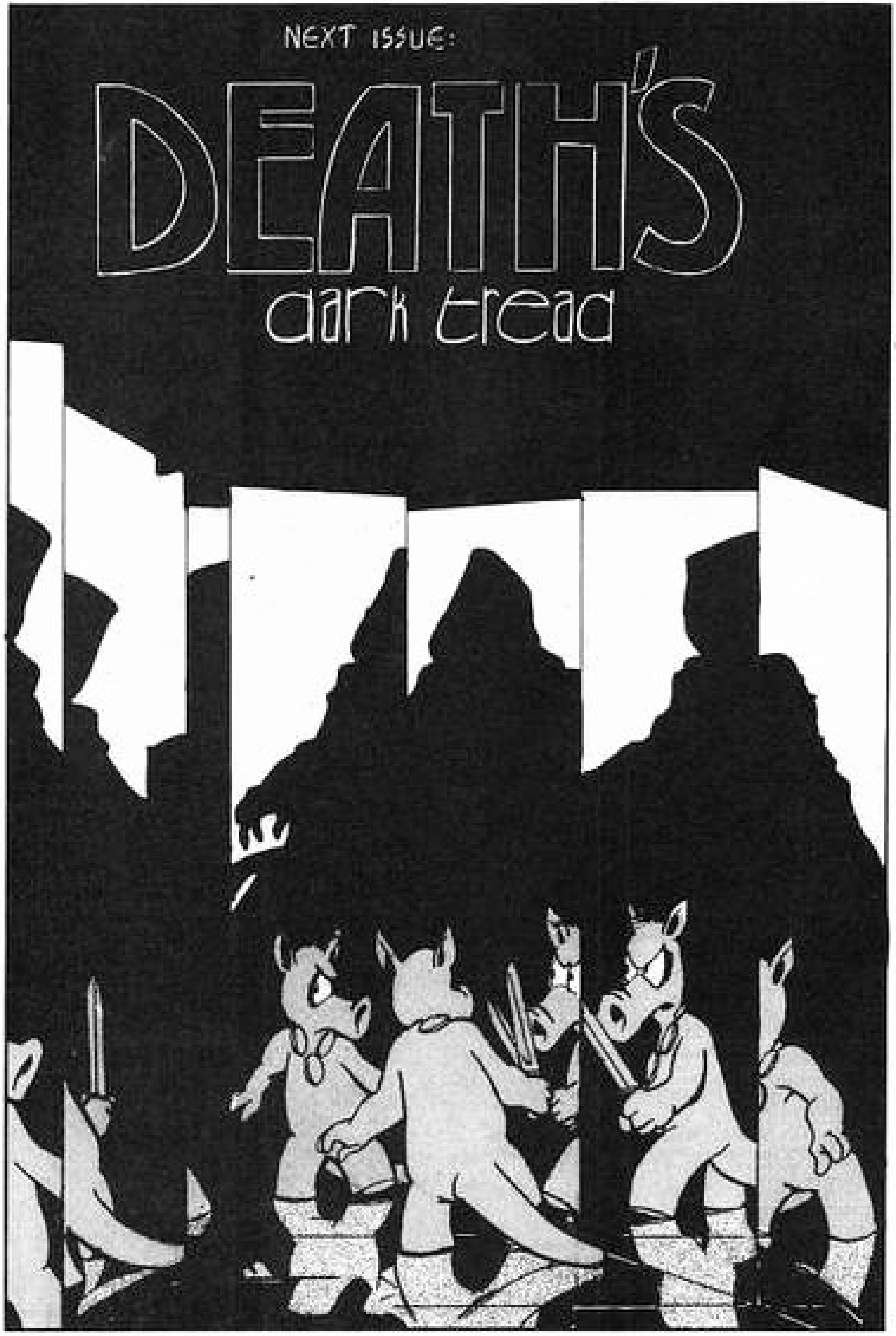
Dear Dave and Deni:

I've just read issues 1 & 2 of **Cerebus the Aardvark** and I want more. I am a rabid Conan the Cimmerian fan. I've collected everything on him and my book and comic book collections are complete. Spoofs are a joy. Starting now I'm collecting Cerebus.

Now, how do I go about it? Where in Toronto will it be consistently on sale?

I sure hope it catches on and you sell so many that it continues for years and years. Have faith, by Crom.

Karen Leigh,
23 Braywin Drive,
Weston, Ontario M9P 2N9


NEXT ISSUE:
DEATH'S
dark tread

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS
THE AARDVARK

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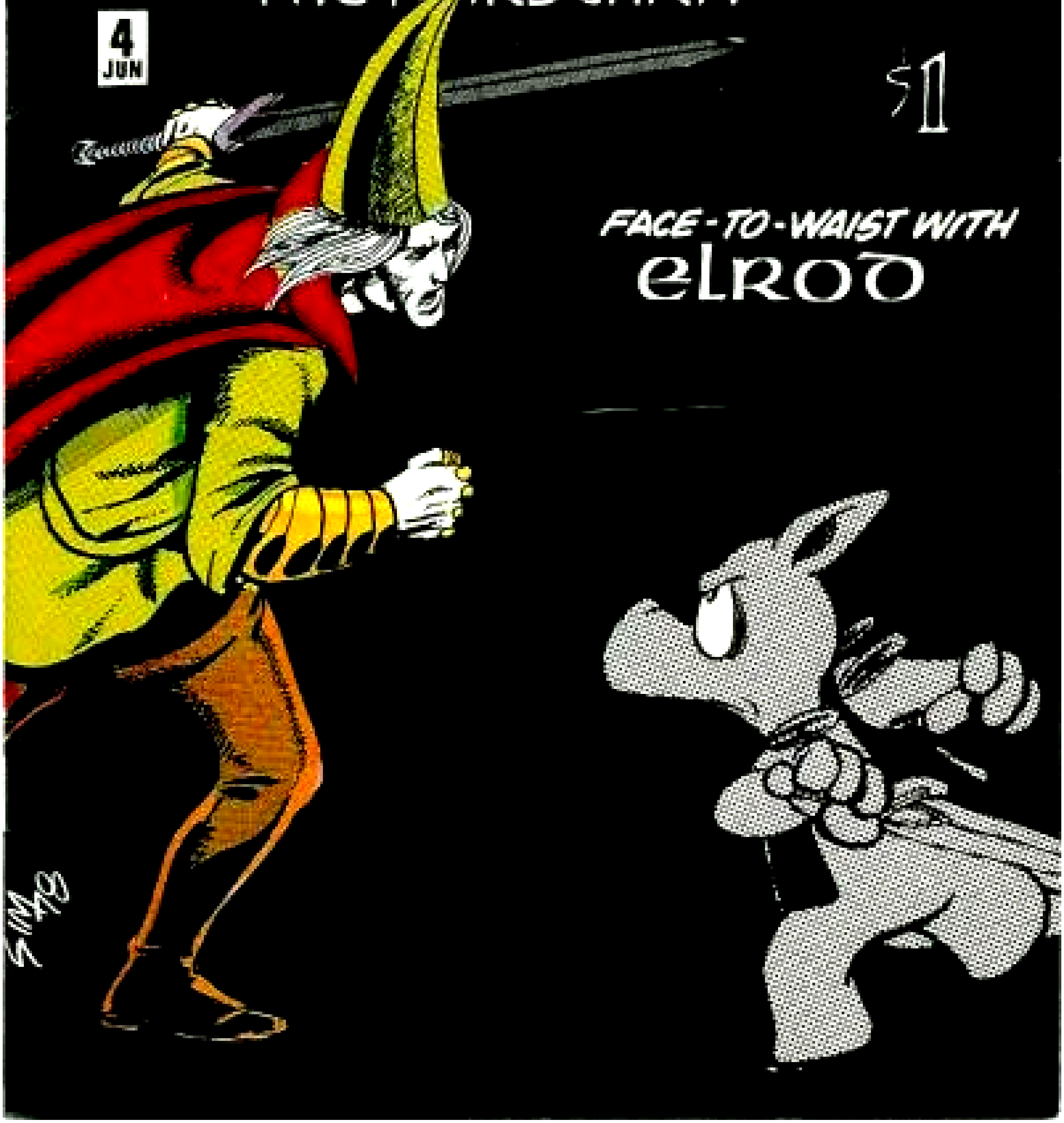
FACE-TO-WAIST WITH
elrod



CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Many things have happened between the last issue and this one. For me, the largest of these was the fact that we moved.

Now, moving a household is one thing. But when that also includes a studio and a publishing office, you begin to wish you hadn't gotten involved with all this. So after three days of moving everything imaginable (and way too many books!) everything is finally where it should be. Except for one thing. My editorial. MY EDITORIAL!!! Oh-my-god-I forgot-about-it!!!

I guess I should be thankful I didn't lose the issue itself.

This issue was somewhat slow to begin with, but really started zooming once Dave settled into it. I feel that he is improving continuously in his drawing, and the improvement shows in this issue. Elrod has got to be such a perfect match for CEREBUS in his inability.......but I don't want to give the story away. Maybe you should just get yourself comfy, and settle into a new adventure with our furry little friend.

Denise Loubert

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Published bi-monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents © 1978 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 no. 4, June 1978-July 1978.

CEREBUS NO. 4 (June, July, 1978)

I distinctly remember a day, in the midst of drawing issue #3 when I suddenly started laughing hysterically. When Deni asked me what the problem was, I sort of gasped, "Elric. Picture Elric saying 'Mind yo' mannuhs, son. I've got a tall pointy hat." She looked at me long and hard with that "My God this time you've finally flipped" look of hers. I knew I was on to something. For the next few days, however, when anyone came over to see us, Deni would insist that I tell **them.** I got a lot of blank looks. I laughed a lot myself, but no one else did.

To be honest, I don't even know where the connection came from. Wendy Pini's jaw hit the floor when I told her that I had never read an Elric story. "But it's perfect," she managed to insist, "the way he's always talking non-stop - it's just like Elric. You've got to read one of the stories so you know how good the parody is." That was last summer and I still haven't read an Elric story - except of course for the Roy Thomas/Barry Smith Conan issues he appeared in.

This issue also introduced Cerebus' little vest - in honour of his first trip to a big city. It was intended as a joke, see. If you go into a city you have to get dressed. I've completely forgotten why I put those little designs on his medallions, though.

It was the most popular issue I had done to that point. People raved to me about it for weeks. Everyone I talked to suddenly developed a Foghorn Leghorn voice and spewed my own writing at me. And do you know what my reaction was when I had finished that story?

They aren't going to like it, because nothing **happens.** I mean he runs across the Albino, who gets him in trouble and then he escapes. I had visions of my brief career flaming out over the horizon.

It's a condition that has persisted to this day. Either you people are easy to please or I'm a wee tad too hard on myself.

Elrod has since appeared in issues 7, 12, 21 and 22. The pattern remains the same. He always pops up, seemingly from nowhere, with no explanation of how he got out of the fix we left him in (Aha! You hadn't noticed had you) and an entirely new vision of the best direction for his life to take.

Characters who are based on other characters in Cerebus tend to be the easiest to write. Once you catch the rhythm of their speech, you're halfway home to the kind of interaction that sells comic books. Someday I'm going to do a story with Cerebus, Elrod and Lord Julius locked in a closet. It'll write itself.

This is also the last story reprinted in this first volume. They span eight months of my life that could best be described as "turbulent." I drew the first three issues in a room that faced onto a four-lane thoroughfare. The room itself would've made a particularly spacious walk-in closet. The fourth one was drawn fourteen floors up in a second bedroom where I'm now typing this - it used to be 'the studio,' now it's 'the office.' When people ask if I ever thought Cerebus would ever be this big, it is a far more difficult question to answer than it appears on the surface. Yes and no. Yes, I had a feeling that there was a need for a new kind of humour in comic books. A feeling that everyone was just a bit weary of the Will Elder style of comic book humour adorned with signs, visual puns and heavy-handed parody. There was nothing wrong with this kind of work, but comic fans had had nothing else for almost thirty years. Mad magazine and Little Annie Fanny are still limping along on the remnants of it. We couldn't fail.

On the other hand, there are the days that Deni and I spent verging on hysteria, sinking into depression and contemplating suicide. I can remember sitting at Toronto Conventions with stacks of issue number one watching people racing past without a sideways glance or (gnngsh) dropping their packages on top of those stacks of number one while they looked through some dealer's stock of Marvel Two-in-One.

It is a source of no small pleasure that those selfsame... people... are now waving twenty and twenty-five singles at us in hopes that we "have a few sacked away that we wouldn't mind selling."

The point is; don't kid yourself. It is an easy matter to say "with issue 6 the circulation went up and then doubled again with issue 16." To live through the uncertainty and the disasters, the royal screw-ups and the shaftings, the bounced cheques and the broken promises... not to mention the occasional good thing (sometimes they were very occasional) is a day-to-day proposition.

When I interviewed Gil Kane for a fanzine in 1973, Walt Kelly had just died the day before. I asked him if there was something about the business that was especially hard on people. He told me, in no uncertain terms, how you can come into comics six feet tall and full of heroic stature and inside of a few years it wears you down to a nub. I'm quite sure I just smiled or chuckled vaguely. After all, things might get bad - but at least he was working inC*O*M*I*C*S, right? We all have problems, but at least when he went to bed at night he could lie there and smile in the dark, knowing in his heart of hearts that he was G*I*L K*A*N*E, right?

And now, when I go to conventions as a guest, and I'm doing sketches of Cerebus and signing autographs and rubbing elbows with F*R*A*N*K M*I*L*L*E*R and joking with J*O*H*N B*Y*R*N*E, somebody will ask me what it's like to do comic books for a living - like **full-time,** you know.

And I'll tell them about Gil Kane and being six feet tall and being worn down to a nub inside of a few years.

Not surprisingly, they usually just smile or chuckle vaguely.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Gentlemen,

I have been a fan of Aardvarks, sword and sorcery tales, and Canadian comics (the latter since I read *Canada Goosed* in 1972) for years. On a world-wide search for Aardvarks (the four in Chicago's Field Museum, the *Sesame Street* film on Aardvarks, etc.)

I like the art and the story. How about more of a sense of humour in Cerebus—a very broad, rough one of course. He had his joke at the end of #1, but something along the lines of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser would be fantastic.

You could give him a recurring foe—an Armadillo named Brutacus? or perhaps Bandilon?

Anyway, you happen to have hit my weak spot and I will continue to look for and purchase **Cerebus.**

Howard Heller
121 Todds Rd. #117,
Lexington, KY.
40509

The question of Cerebus' sense of humour will be dealt with in time. At the moment, the decision is made on an issue-to-issue basis on whether Cerebus will be the perpetrator or the butt of the jokes in any given story. For the moment, however, he will be the only animal (funny or otherwise) in CEREBUS.

Re: **CEREBUS,** ignoble EARTH-PIG, defiler of tradition,
grey Homunculus.
From: RED SONJA, Woman Warrior, exile from Hyrkania.

TAWDRY ELF-PIG!

It has come to my attention that the adventures of my sister, RED SOPHIA, have been sported about in an unseemly, if Artful manner. Few had known of the existence of SOPHIA. The legend has it that I had but two BROTHERS. I indeed had brothers, and a father and mother. Only SOPHIA and I survived the carnage in the fields beyond the sea of Vilayet.

The news that HENROT was still alive surprised me. The old buzzard. It does seem natural that the old enchanter would be attracted to the likes of the scurrilous Pig, for whatever reason. Assassination is a fitting contract considering the vile act upon SOPHIA's character.

So, she's calling HENROT her ''Father'' now, EH? That's as good a name as any. I had HEARD that the two were living together. SOPHIA always was strongly attracted to WIZARDS.

As for her liaison with the truncated barbarian, I'm not surprised. SOPHIA was never as deft with the Blade as I. Little wonder that the Pig bested her...but to suffer the indignity of a swat on the **rump!** How like SOPHIA to ply him with affection and GRANOLA.

GURANNIAN TONSIL KISSING was a specialty of hers, tho I had not heard that she'd mastered MONOGRAMMING or the Art of TAIL MASSAGE. CEREBUS does have a beguiling tail, but I'd be more apt to ram it up his BUM, than treat it with affection.

FERAS was known to me. 'Twas said that nature had endowed him too little, causing life-long anguish. It would appear that CEREBUS was endowed not at ALL. Perhaps the TAIL then has a secondary function. Short of that, it may be best that he remain one of a kind.

I do hasten to add that the tale was well told and rendered with considerable skill. The technique reminded me of the spells cast by a Sorcerer I once knew. You must have heard of him—EVADMIS THE LIMNER. HE drew his power from undercooked PORK!

Red Sonja

To which we can only add—"Tarim!"

Dear Dave:
By now you will have received the letter from the rambunctious REDHEAD. Sorry for what she said about CEREBUS, but you know SONJA. That's evident in the drawings of SONG OF RED SONJA, er, *SOPHIA*.

It's great, Dave. There are some really nifty sequences. The GRANOLA page. SOPHIA'S dance (Bum BaDa DA DA) NEAT!

I could go on and on, and I SHOULD, But it might become unseemly. Thanks Dave, from this old creature of the drawing caves. In time things like this will happen to you, for you are surely on your way.

Frank Thorne,
Scotch Plains, New Jersey.

The Staff of CEREBUS is shocked—truly shocked—to discover that Red Sonja's letter originated from the same address as that of Mr. Thorne. We think an artist his age ought to be ashamed of himself.

Dear Dave:
A few blunt remarks concerning CEREBUS. The notion of a barbarian aardvark warrior is, at best, ludicrous & at worst, sacrilege. Here we have a genre which is desperately trying to raise itself out of the mire of crude, insipid pulp fiction in order to acquire a new degree of respectability, & what do you do? Do you emulate Moorcock? No. Wagner? No. Saunders? No. Instead, you let a bloody aardvark run amok, deflating our newly found sophistication & introducing into S&S all sorts of abhorrent & destructive rubbish: humour, satire, & Crom forbid, fun! Fun, Dave, fun!

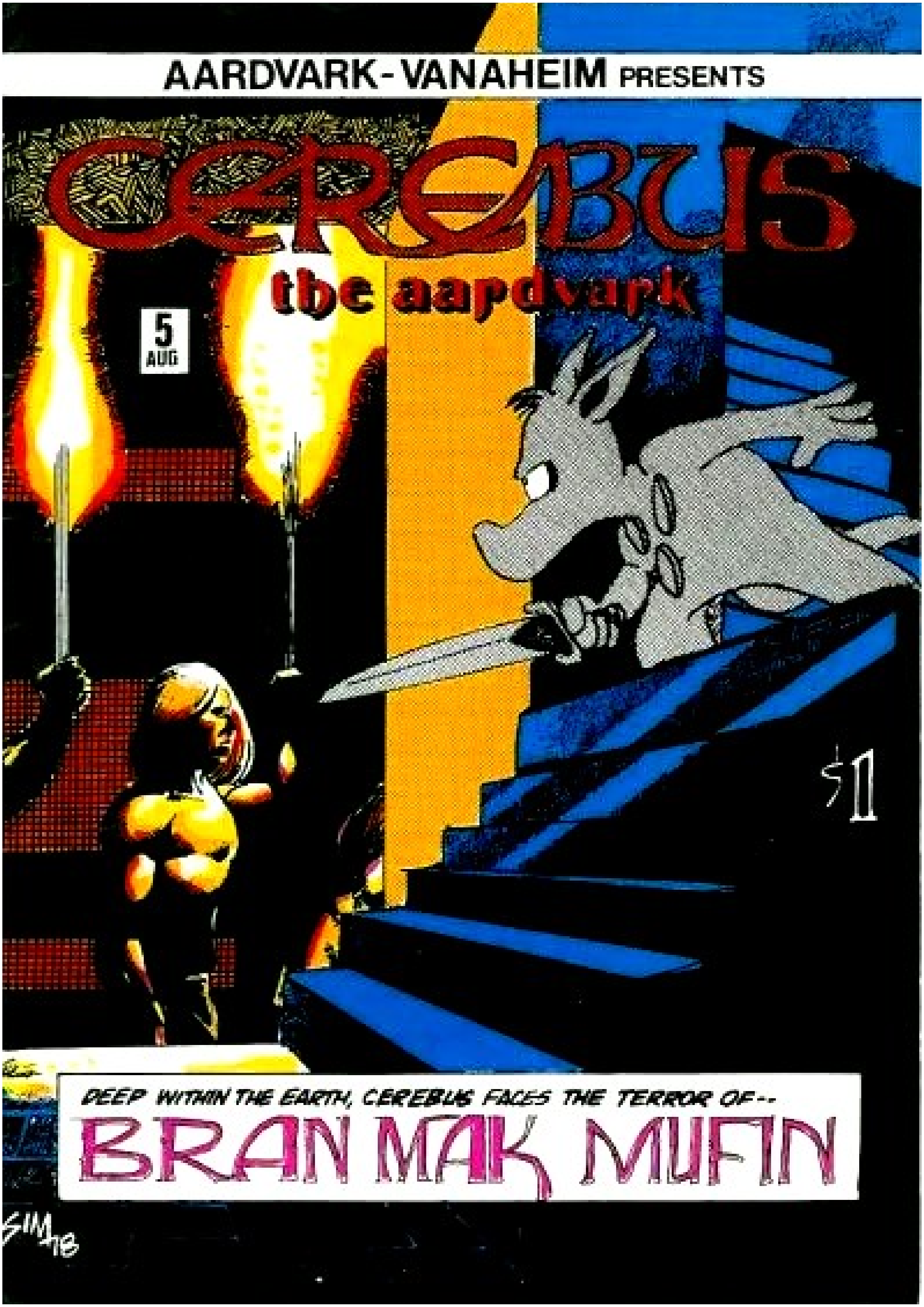
I've never been to Kitchener, Dave, but if there are any holes or crawlspaces to be found in that town you & that long-snouted abortion had better scurry into one, taking your drawing board with you, because when Kane, Elric & Imaro learn of the emergence of this funny animal usurper, they're going to be looking for cruel revenge. How long, Dave will your fragile pens & brushes be able to ward off the savage, relentless onslaught of cold steel? By Crom, Dave, you've set Hyborian aesthetics back about 12,000 years (or so). In short I loved it.

You've clearly got a winning character & I wish you & Deni every success with the comic.

John Bell,
PO Box 3174 South,
Halifax, N.S. B3J 3H5

John Bell (Kosekin Books) is one of the largest dealers in sword and sorcery and related items in Canada. Anyone interested in his latest catalogue can write to him at the above address. Cerebus is not intimidated by John's threats. So far the Earth-pig is batting a thousand against two wizards, Red Sophia, a shadow beast, a skeleton, Thugg the Unseemly and others. So there.

NEXT
BRAN MAK MUFIN


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
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DEEP WITHIN THE EARTH, CEREBUS FACES THE TERROR OF--
BRAN MAK MUFIN
SIM 78

CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

This is one issue that instead of almost finishing the comic book, it almost eliminated the artist and publisher. Things had gotten a bit tight for money and so naturally things got a [illegible] rough. Money, or rather the lack of it, has a way of doing that to your life.

But publishers aren't supposed to complain about such things. After all, that's what qualifies us for the game, the willingness to put our money on the line. (However, some of us end up putting a bit more of ourselves on that proverbial line.)

You will be happy to note that you are given a hint to Cerebus's origins in this issue. I must admit it wasn't enough to satisfy my curiosity, but trade secrets are difficult things to pry out of artists. I have a feeling that Dave's saving it for a real smashing story in the future.

Cerebus's adventures are slowed down a bit this issue, which is nice as it helps me to catch my breath. I've never known an aardvark to get himself in so many close situations. But then I don't know too many aardvarks. And I suppose that if you're short and have a big nose you learn to carry a sword with you. (If I had to carry that much weight on my face I'd be short-tempered too) But there are times, for Cerebus, that being an aardvark can mean more than just looking funny. If that sounds like a lead into the story, you bet your booties it is. So read on .....

Denise Loubert

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Published bi-monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents ©1978 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 no. 5, August, 1978.

CEREBUS No. 5 (August, 1978)

This story only has one joke. Cerebus' fur smells bad when it gets wet. Why, you might rightly ask, is this the only joke in the whole issue (barring the phonetic Pigtish pun names)?

Well.

By the time I was finished drawing issue No. 4, I was very happy with what was happening with Cerebus. Issue No. 4 had humour, panache, charisma, style, wit, grace, charm, radiance, subtlety, balance, depth, richness. Contrast this attitude (my view of No. 4 while I was trying to think up something to do in issue No. 5) with the one in paragraph five of my introduction to Cerebus No. 4 (in the last volume of SWORDS -- being my view of issue No. 4 when it was drawn but not yet printed). You see why I'm crazy? Same story, but one minute it's garbage and the next it's a masterpiece. This was very pronounced between issues No. 4 and 5. I was starting to get a grasp of the kind of material I thought Cerebus fans were looking for (there even *were* a few Cerebus fans by the time the fourth issue came out), but I was trying to get an idea of how to do a little less and still get away with it, so this issue was to be a lesson to myself; Dave Sim's First Annual Symposium on How To Fudge Twenty-two Pages and Get Away With It. Concept One was pen lines of varying length and straightness slashing diagonally across the page, with some silhouettes in the middle distance slashed with white paint of varying intensities to create the illusion of driving rain, as well as minor splash lines and effects on the side of trees and in water pools and currents. The extreme background featured two mountain ranges overlapping, done with dark and light fleck tone. It was sort of an experiment in holding a page together with extremely thin black lines and a bare minimum of solid black. This is how things went on page one, anyway. Concept Two was all thin lines, a sudden use of solid black in the middle distance and in the foreground and the alternation of diagonal and vertical pen lines to indicate rain. I was still trying to add a few shorter strokes just to break up the monotony and some use of splashing to show they aren't walking in Jell-o.

By the time I hit page four, we are into Concept Three; Dramatic Fudging and I Dare You to Tell Me So To My Face. Here I am completely without shame. For Five and One Half Pages, the rain looks like it was drawn with a ruler (it was), and the horizon is kept low enough so only the barest minimum of tall grass needs to be drawn. This was followed by Concept Four: If You Liked Vertical Lines You're Going to Love Pitch Black. Fortunately my chutzpah ran out and I couldn't have faced myself in the mirror in the morning if I stuck with the solid black for one more panel. What I replaced it with couldn't exactly be called moral either; Nothing-Could-Cast-A-Straight-Line-Shadow-Like-That Shadows (also known as Concept Five) and Cross-Hatching Till You Could Plotz (Concept Six). The Ending? Well, this was around the time that I got Cerebus' origin straight in my head (Not on your life -- someday I'm going to have it carved on stone tablets and charge everybody two hundred dollars for a peek) and this issue ended on a completely self-indulgent note. A present to me. So you didn't understand it? So who said you were supposed to?

A few weeks after this issue came out, I got a call from Phil Seuling who was our biggest distributor at the time. He didn't like the issue. He said that the first four issues were great, that they had gotten progressively better -- more humour, more plot, better pacing. But No. 5 "didn't help the book. It didn't hurt, but it didn't help." That's the way Phil says things. "It didn't hurt, but it didn't help."

He was right. Number 5 was a throwback to the second issue. A straight adventure strip with a little humour here and there. It was an attempt to create the illusion that the book had its ups and downs. One issue funny, one issue not so funny. A kind of twenty-two page shrug that translated into "You think I can come up with a new Elrod in every issue? What are you, crazy?"

This tied in neatly with the Gil Kane interview in Comics Journal No. 38 that had started me re-thinking the whole approach I was taking to doing my own comic book. The particular quote that influenced me was:

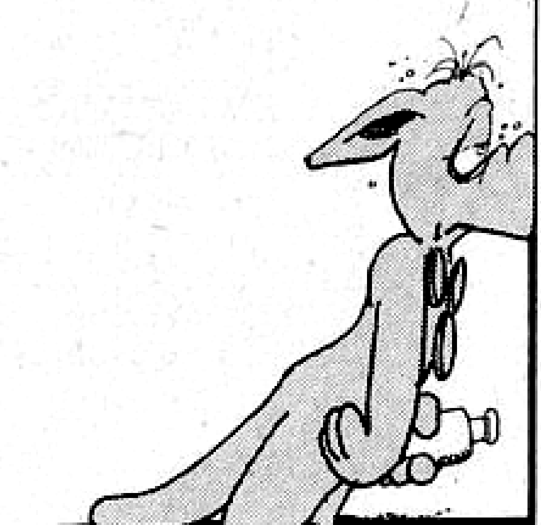
"The difference between a comic book and a novel is not labor, not effort, it's the values. In other words, there are no meaningful values in a comic book. The people in comic books are two dimensional people going through the most elementary kind of situations, not enough to sustain anybody's interest beyond an adolescent. A novel has characterization, it has suspense, it has a structured situation full of

Cerebus No. 5 (cont'd)

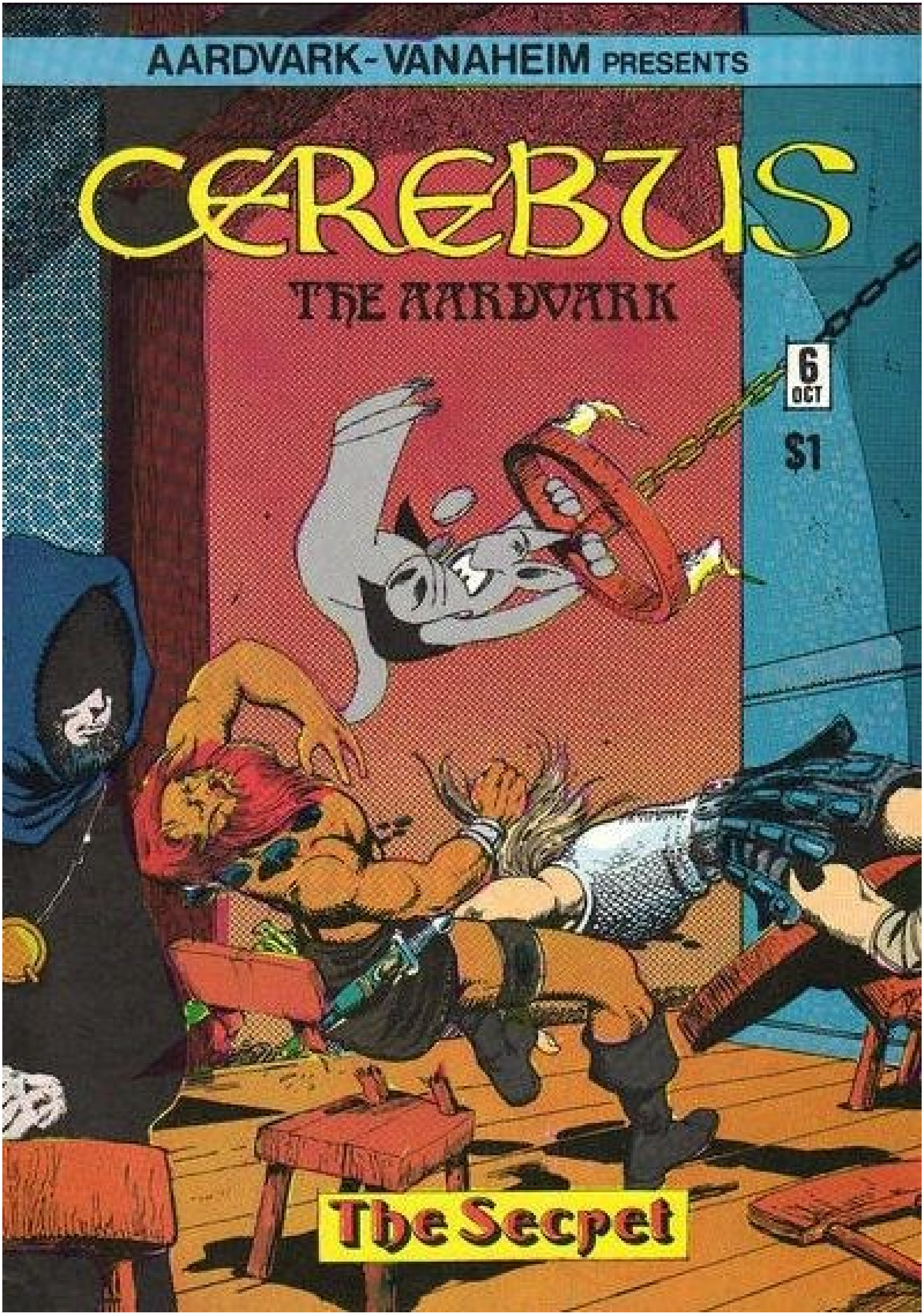
substantial values that will hold the interest of an intelligent person. That's what I mean. Those values, if they're properly translated -- Harvey Kurtzman translated them into comics. His comics were literate, they were intelligent, they were humane, they were interesting, they were funny, they were everything."

"For instance, political cartoons, humor strips in newspapers are written in an infinitely more adult way: they're more intelligent, they're written for adults by adults with adult humor. They're really clever, and they represent adult values and that's why adults read them. Adults read them because, regardless of the fact that they're comics, they're dealing with adult frames of reference. And comic books don't have those frames of reference."

After I finished the fifth issue I embarked on an extremely lengthy process of applying adult sensibilities to each issue of Cerebus, trying to approach every plot problem on as mature a level of communication as I could. It was not easy, and still isn't. But at the very least, I wanted to feel that each issue of Cerebus advanced our cause just that much more than the issue that preceded it. Fortunately, fan reviewers, editors, columnists and letter-writers have an uncanny knack for recognizing an issue that pulls sideways instead of forwards (I knew they were good for something).



DRUNK AGAIN.


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
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The Secret

CEREBUS

This issue I've got so much to tell you that it's hard to know where to begin.

For starters, in August Dave and I went to a comics convention in Toronto. We had the surprise of our lives, for we found out that CEREBUS has quite a following. By the time we came home Dave had writer's cramp from signing autographs. He was so happy that I doubt his feet hit the ground for a week. We had so many people coming up and telling us about CEREBUS, what he eats and drinks, how he thinks - it was great! I even had someone come up to me and ask me if I'd be interested in publishing a comic book of his work. Even tho I had to say no, it was a great compliment. To be recognized as a publisher is something important to me. I'd like to say thanks to every one who came by our table and I hope to see you again at the next convention!

The other big announcement this issue is a more personal one. Dave and I are GETTING MARRIED!! In fact, by the time that this issue goes to print, we will be married. This issue is special to me in that the ending is my wedding present from Dave. No joke!! It's different and when you read it I think you'll understand.

One last bit of news. CEREBUS has been doing quite well, sales wise (keep your fingers crossed, though), and if the present growing trend continues we're planning on expanding at Aardvark-Vanaheim Press next year. Maybe sooner if our finances will allow it. What this will mean is a new title to be coming out as soon as we can afford to print it and fill enough orders. We are also going to be putting out a newsletter with a six-page story (CEREBUS, of course) and info to keep you up to date on what's happening here at A-V Press. This is, of course, if enough people are interested in seeing this sort of thing. So if you'd like to see this, drop us a postcard with your name and address and we'll start compiling a mailing list. We are thinking of making it $2 for a five issue subscription. (Don't send money now. We need to get enough orders before we can start on this thing.) And if you buy through a dealer, let him know that you are interested. We can't expand without you.

End of lecture. I'll keep you posted each issue how things progress. I think it's time we got around to the important stuff.....like reading this issue of CEREBUS. Right?

Denise Loubert

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Published bi-monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents © 1978 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 no. 4, June 1978-July 1978.

CEREBUS No. 6 (October-November, 1978)

So I felt really guilty after No. 5 started getting reaction and I was in the situation of resolving to do better in the future.

I didn't have the ending in mind until I was a fair bit of the way through the issue. I knew it would go over big. There's no bigger closet sentimentalist in the world than a comic book fan. You have to sneak up on them, but they cry buckets if you catch them off-guard.

The relationship between Turg and E'lass was one that I enjoyed quite a bit. You see, I used to be short in high school. We're talking s-h-o-r-t, people -- Lollipop Guild, knee-high to a grasshopper. When you are shorter than everyone else, you think a certain way. You become a smart-ass. You cut them off at the knee-caps verbally. When you are short, tall people seem incredibly stupid. Their arms are too long. They say "uh" a lot. They can never hold still while they talk. They grin at you like Great Danes standing on their hind legs, begging you with their eyes to not make them feel so...so... TALL!

But that was high school. Since then, I've grown to a towering 5'10". It all happened within four months of dropping out of school -- I think they were stifling more than my creativity. The strangest thing happens when I'm around those of the diminutive persuasion (like a certain Marvel inker featured in this issue who shall be nameless). I become incredibly slow-witted. My arms seem to grow longer and heavier and sway when I walk. I say "uh" a lot. I shift from one leg to the other.

Maybe it's just me, but I find relationships beteen tall and short people tend to follow this pattern.

Old prejudices die hard, though. I notice re-reading the story that the characters are competent in direct proportion to their relative size.

Turg is obviously run by E'lass. E'lass does his best to stay on top of the situation, to adapt to changing circumstances and improvise new solutions to sudden problems.

His mistake is in not being the shortest person in the book.

Even drugged and preoccupied, Cerebus manages to make a shambles of his best laid plans (when it comes to mice and men, my money's on the mice). He is more than a match for Turg and the Borealan mercenary.

Other prejudices die even harder.

Remember a few paragraphs ago when I was in high school?

There is one memory of high school that stands out in my mind. Girls. Take a look at the last panel on page six. This is a picture of me in high school (it's also a picture of me in public and senior public school, but we won't go into that). I spent all of high school doing exciting things like this: I would watch a girl in class. I would watch her between classes. I would watch her eat her lunch. I would watch her put her coat on. I would follow her home (darting from bush to bush of course). I would sit across the street and watch her house. I would look up her phone number and memorize it (just in case I felt like dialing the first four numbers and hanging up).

Jaka is the personification of all of those long distance romances. I never indicated to any of these girls that I liked sitting across the street watching their houses. In my heart of hearts, of course, I knew that if I just worked up the courage to talk to them, that they would fall madly in love with me and we would live happily ever after. Of course, I also knew in my heart of hearts that I had actually been born on a distant planet circling a red sun and was rocketed to earth as an infant, only to pass through a cloud of gold kryptonite which wiped out my super-human powers (My parents would never own up to it, but I think it was just to keep from hurting my feelings).

I can remember trying to come up with the ending for a few days. I knew that Cerebus would have to snap out of it eventually (I couldn't picture Cerebus fans reading twenty issues of Cerebus sitting across the street from Jaka's house). It was at that point that I realized the essence of the problem. I had been thinking of Cerebus' point of view of the situation, but I hadn't stopped to consider how Jaka was reacting to *him.*

But you don't want to hear about that, do you?

You don't care about how I came up with the story, or how I came up with the ending. Do you? No!

You want to know when Jaka is coming back. You want to know what she's been doing all this time. You want to know if Cerebus remembers her or not. You want to know in which issue the wedding takes place. You want to know what kind of flowers they're going to have. There are probably a few people out there who bought this book in the hopes that this introduction would reveal the whole ball of wax so you could sleep easier tonight.

You badger me about her in your letters, you hound me unmercifully at conventions. The phone rings in the middle of the night and it's some tormented soul whispering "When? When?"

Well, let this be a warning to you.

Lay off, or I'll drop her out of a tall building.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Dave,

I thought Cerebus the Aardvark was great and thoroughly enjoyed the ELROD sequence, particularly the bit with the black blade.

My only complaint — and it's hardly that — is that the Elrod drawn derives from no description of mine, but from Barry Smith who used Jack Gaughan's Elric covers for Lancer as a model. Jack Gaughan's ideas were all his own and did not follow my descriptions at all.

Interesting to see a third generation version.

Thanks for Cerebus. I look forward to issue 7!

Very Best,
Michael Moorcock
London, England

Longtime fans of sword and sorcery need no introduction to Michael Moorcock, creator of Elric. His comments are much appreciated and help to tide one through long hours at the drawing board.

Dear Dave, Deni and Cerebus:

Finally I write! I took No. 5 from the convention on Saturday and read it through again, and then a few more times. Then I read the first four again. There's not much to add to what we've already talked about so much personally, but, for publication, here are three thoughts.

1: The first issue was probably the best thing I'd seen up to then for an amateur or private publication (ie. not DC, Marvel, etc.) and every issue since has been an improvement in some way on that excellence.

2: I think that now, with five issues past, you have developed just the right feel for the mood of this comic. It is sufficiently serious for a Sword-and-Sorcery genre entry, with a little more insight into Cerebus' character, and past, with each issue, and just the right amount of tongue-in-cheek humour. (Also the occasional out right slapstick, but then, it is a comic book...)

3: After the powers-that-be have seen your worth, and you've moved on to the fame and fortune with the big leagues that is so rightly yours, please, PLEASE keep on putting out Cerebus. (Maybe you don't want "fame and fortune with the big leagues" so maybe someday Aardvark Vanaheim will be the big league, and you won't have to join some other company to move up in the world.)

Deni, your comments at the front are a very special part of Cerebus; keep them coming too. It's not every artist who has a live-in publisher to give him support, of whatever type needed, and your words at the front reflect this good fortune.

John Anderson,
202 Mackenzie St.,
P.O. Box 711,
Alliston, Ontario

John Anderson has the distinction of being the first Cerebus fan. Ever since we debuted Cerebus at a one day Toronto convention in late 1977 with the only printed copy of the first issue, John has been the bane and the boon of Cerebus' existence. The bane because he invariably picks out the parts of the stories that I, myself, am unhappy with and the boon because no page that has been laboured over until it is perfect is ever wasted on him. He usually buys the original. If anyone is interested in what pages of Cerebus are favourites of mine, he has only to check John's collection of original artwork. Most of them are there.

Dear Aardvark:

I picked up Cerebus No. 4 at the Bookstore today and loved it. As a fledgling artist myself, I enjoy seeing other people do professional work, such as yourselves and turn it into serious stuff. Terrif! I hope Aardvark continues forever, as you've got a great idea and the talent to back it up.

David R. Wooten
808 Arbor Road,
Winston-Salem, N.C.
27104

Reader Wooten will be happy to learn that No. 4's Elrod the Albino (without doubt the most popular character besides Cerebus in the first five issues) returns next issue.

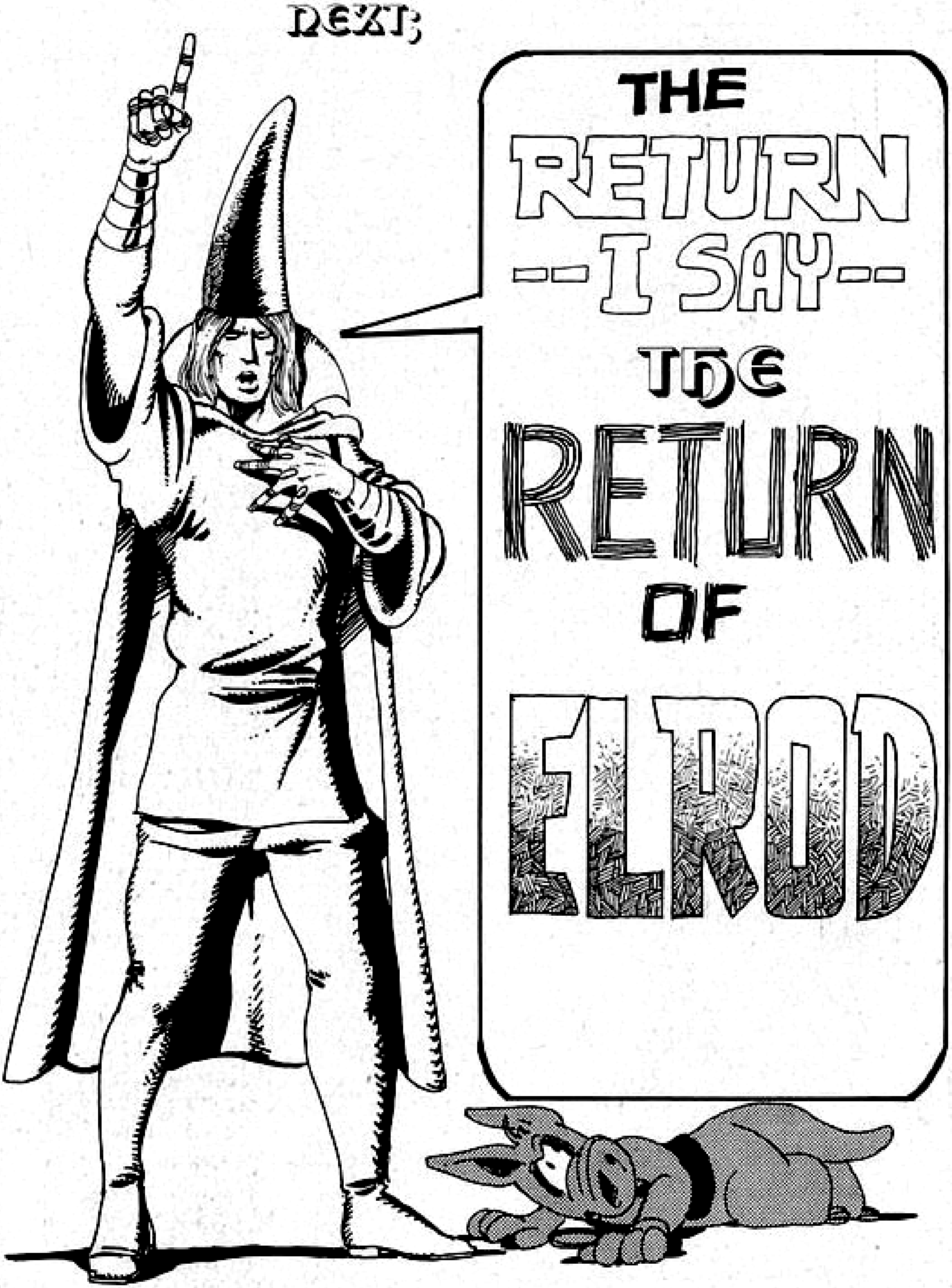
NOTES

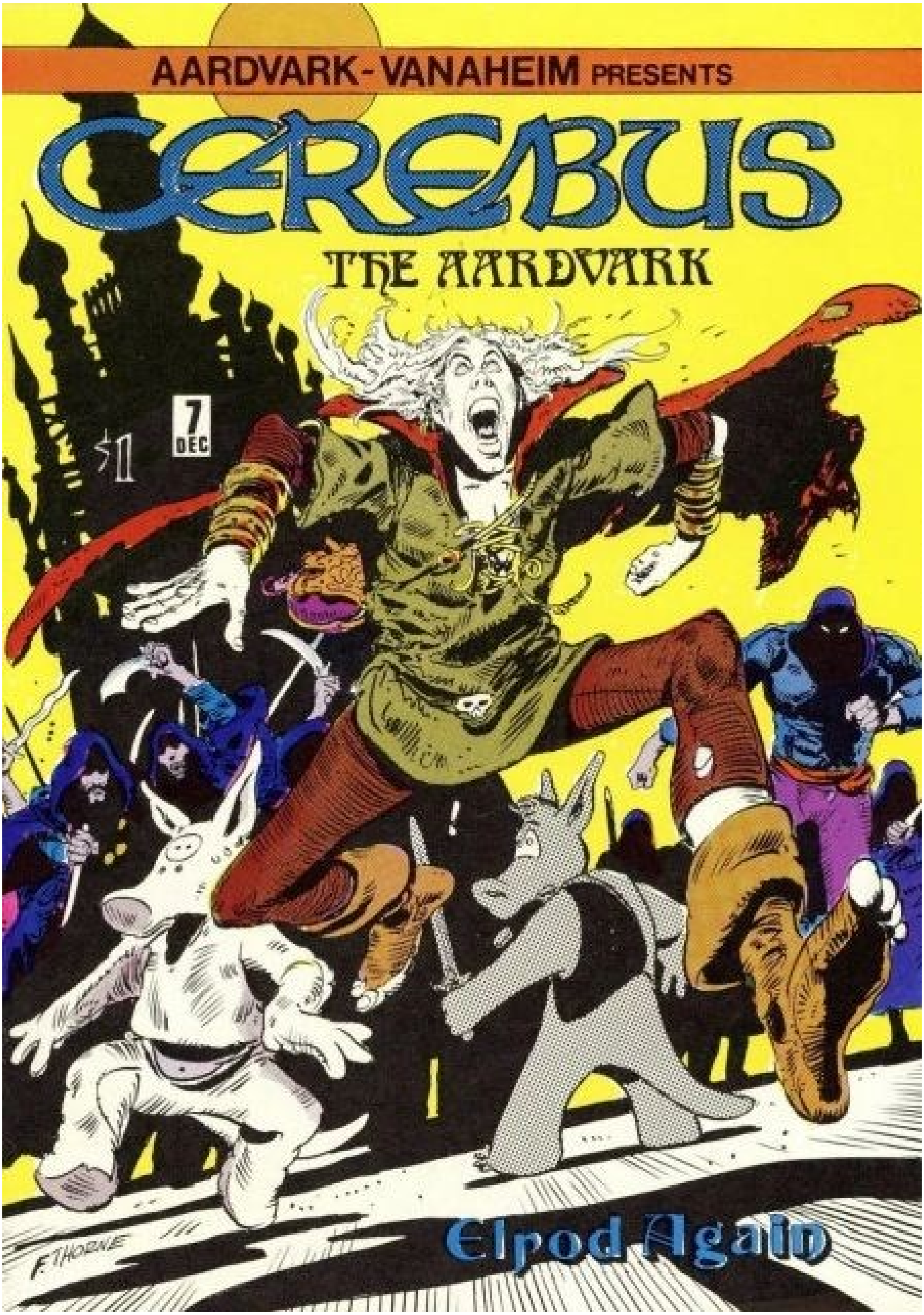
The production of a bi-monthly comic book, as I have discovered in these last twelve months, is an arduous process. Deni and I have suffered through countless crises, big and small, each of which has, at various times, threatened to terminate the Earth-pig's existence. Through all of this, the disappointments, the late hours, deadlines, packing, mailing, nail-biting, etcetera, it has been primarily the readers of Cerebus and a few close friends who have helped me through. Contrary to what is evidently a popular myth, one does not get rich producing a comic book. Producing a comic book and seeing it through its first year of life is one of the best ways to get UN-rich. I don't feel I'm revealing any deep trade secrets by revealing this. My plans for Cerebus have always been long-term ones, and as I type this, fully one year after a very cautious and pessimistic editorial in the first issue, a number of these plans are coming to fruition. I encourage you now, as I did then, to let us know what you like and dislike in Cerebus — to suggest future directions and perhaps remind me of directions from early issues that haven't been followed.

As a means of helping me through the next few months of expansion for Cerebus, I am also taking this opportunity to offer original artwork from these first six issues to the readers of Cerebus. A number of pages (including the complete issue No. 4 — sorry about that Elrod fans) have already been sold, so I encourage you, if interested, to send for your favourite pages, but to also list alternates. Naturally the pages will be mailed in secure no-bending packages. The cost per page is twenty dollars. Sorry the covers are not for sale.

Thanks again to all those who bought this issue of CEREBUS and especially those who keep coming back for more.

And just so they know how much they've helped, I'd like to thank Phil Seuling, Deni, Michael Loubert (who helped me plot this issue), Harry Kremer, John Biernat, Jim Friel, Frank Thorne, Mike Friedrich, Gene Day and Sally. You all make a difficult job a little bit less so.


NEXT;
THE RETURN --I SAY-- THE RETURN OF ELROD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!
Elrod Again
F. THORNE

CEREBUS

A Brief Note

This issue was, once again, a busy one. Between issues six and seven Dave and I were married. I thought you might enjoy the picture above where we were toasting with - you guessed it - apricot brandy!!

Another nice thing that happened is we received a letter from Henning Kure of A/S Interpresse in Denmark. He is preparing an eighty-page magazine with stories by Brunner and Leiloha and he wants to publish CEREBUS in it. He is going to have it translated to Danish. That will be something to look forward to seeing!!

Lastly, in this issue, our old friend Elrod is back, and he hasn't changed a bit, unfortunately for CEREBUS. The results are as funny as ever, so sit back and - enjoy!!

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark-Vanaheim Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Published bi-monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents © 1978 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 no. 7, December 1978-January 1979.

CEREBUS No. 7 (December 1978 - January 1979)

"The Return of Elrod."

This story was another small step forward. Having managed to sustain two (count 'em two) plots in No. 6, I was ready for some experimenting ... this time the developing of a mistaken identity segment, timing it so that the overlapping action follows plausibly. It wasn't a new idea, but it is a lot more difficult to do on paper than it is to watch develop in a movie or on a television sitcom. This was still primarily an intimidating time period, as far as stretching my abilities. My tendency was toward this kind of trade-off in the writing stage -- if I'm going to do a mistaken identity scene, which required thought for accurate pacing, I better put Elrod in this issue, since his dialogue and pacing were easy for me to work with. I resolved to stay away from these "Cerebus as Messiah" stories when I was done this one. It *is* an aspect of Cerebus' future, but it by no means influences his present actions to any large degree. Issues 5 and 7 were intended as complimentary stories. "Aardvarks have been around for a while and they tend to do highly noticeable things" was the message. Just file it away for now.

As for the art, this issue was my first radical departure from my intention to be a major Barry Smith sequal -- the cross-hatching on the splash page. I was trying to find a Barry Smith-style texture that would allow me to render the webbing in two different shades. I broke down and did tight weave cross-hatching even though Smith had never used it.

Suddenly I was free.

Why -- I bet I could do anything I wanted!

I mulled that over while I opened the story on a snowy expanse of flatland. I mulled it over for four and a half pages of white flatland. I mulled it over for three panels of priests lighting candles.

And then page seven.

BAM!

A pseudo-art nouveau background design, cross-hatch shadows, warped bricks drawn with short parallel strokes, two wall decorations of differing sizes, a stuffed polar bear, two bird's eye view panels, one of which has a genuine checker-board bird in it.

I *could* do anything I wanted.

Reverse lettering, borderless panels, high contrast partial silhouettes.

Hey, this is *neat-o!*

I bet if I call up Frank Thorne, tell him I'm sending him full size xeroxes of the first ten pages, that he'll even draw a cover!

And he *did*, too!

The Cerebus stuffed toy debuted in this issue, as well. Many were the nights that little Sarah Hitchens would be awake into the wee small hours of the morning. Push the needle in, pull the needle out. After about six months, her conversation degenerated into fitful gurglings deep in her throat, punctuated by pithy remarks like "Little gray arms and legs ... Little gray ears and foot-pads! I hate you ... Do you hear me? Hate you!"

Fortunately, time and a saner life style are great healers.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dave:
Really enjoy your Cerebus book, the best being No. 4. Like Denise said on the inside front cover, your art is really getting better. To tell the truth, I never cared much for your work in Dark Fantasy, but I think your Cerebus is where it's at. Your style has much improved and your backgrounds and use of zip-a-tone are very well done.

I'm also a big fan of Moorcock's Eternal Champions. How about a book with Corum and Cerebus. Something to think about!

Also do you wish to sell any of your Cerebus pages, particularly the ones in issue No. 4. Keep Cerebus going strong and thanks for the laughs Cerebus gives me.

Larry Gay
RR 2 Box 164B
Germantown, Ohio

By now, I think I could have sold every page from No. 4 about three times over. Fortunately, there is now a new Elrod story pages are available from. Anyone wishing to order any of the pages from this issue can write to me. Enclose $20.00 for each page and please list alternates.

Dear Dave; Deni; Cerebus!
The duck is dead; Long live the Aardvark!

At last the true comingling of the horror and humour of life, all enwrapped in the unconquerable, fierce spirit of the determined individualist. Vive Cerebus!

Artwork gets "A". I enjoy the cartoonic simplicity of our Earth-pig, contrasted as it is against the more grimly realistic secondary characters and backgrounds.

Stories get "A+". Well crafted plot lines carry the reader far beyond the mere satire into a realm of fabulous adventure.

Question: May we please have subtle hints, or an outright issue, about Cerebus' origin?

Suggestion: Captioner — please stop making "P's" that look like "D's" and vice versa.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

David A. Holt
1966 Main West No. 1108
Hamilton, Ontario 18S 1J6

Coincidentally enough, we are presently in the planning stages of a book entitled **The Aardvarkian Age** by Michael Loubert and myself which will finally tear the lid off the Earth-pig's origin, as well as giving information on the world he lives in. As to your suggestion, dractice make derfect, so I'll just keed trying.

Dear Dave & Denise,
I thoroughly enjoyed the first five issues of **Cerebus**. Yet, as for No. 6, well to put it bluntly, it broke my wittle heart! Must it end this way!?! PLEASE, oh please bring Cerebus' memory of navels and apricot brandy back. I'd love to see the aardvark and Jaka live adventurously ever after.

In addition, I'd like to say that I think Dave's art is developing into some of the best in comic art today. Keep up the good work and I'll be glad to continue carrying **Cerebus** in our store.

The Great Escape
2433 Bardstown Road,
Louisville, KY.

The jury is still out on whether or not Cerebus and Jaka will get back together (the jury being me) — but you can count on the fact that there's a little of the Toast of lest stuck in the back of the Earth-pig's mind. Only time will tell what happens from that.

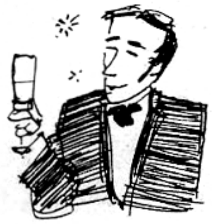
Notes

Die-hard Cerebus fanatics should start saving their nickels for the end of December. That's when the Earth-pig makes his first appearance outside of these pages in a six page story entitled "Demonhorn". The publication is Tim Caldwell's new 64 page NUCLEUS comic book. Chronologically, the story takes place between issue 5's "Bran Mak Muffin" and 6's "The Secret". It can be had for 1.50 plus .25 postage from NUCLEUS,
Wyandotte, Michigan, 48192.

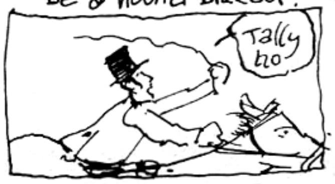
GREAT WASTERS FROM HISTORY NOT COUNTING DAVE SIM

No. 1. JACK MYTTON 1796 - 1834 - the Single Page Version -

Mytton was said to be half mad without a drink and quite mad with one.

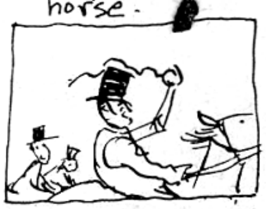


He was a Master of Foxhounds in Shropshire, England. His pack was terrible as he was too impatient to be a hound breeder.

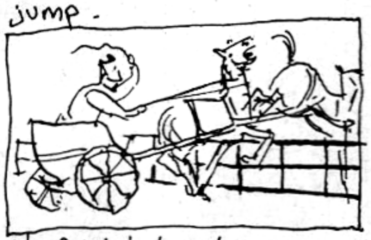


It was also too time consuming to hunt a wild fox. He'd buy a couple and break between the two for luncheon at an Inn.

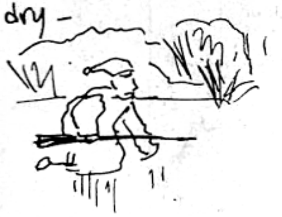
..after which he was usually incapable of staying on his horse -



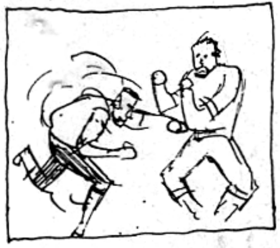
More interested in feats of bravery, he once drove his gig at a turnpike gate to see if the leader could jump -



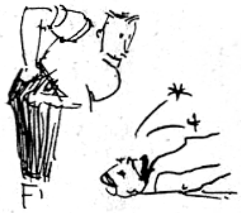
He once went duck-shooting on a sheet of ice clad only in his night shirt so as to keep his clothes dry -



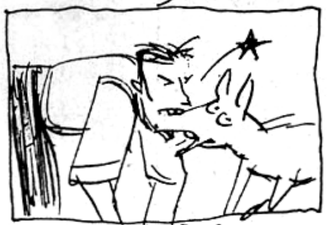
He was constantly involved in fights and always started them



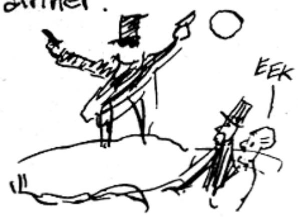
A wealthy and generous man, he generally gave his defeated opponent ten shillings



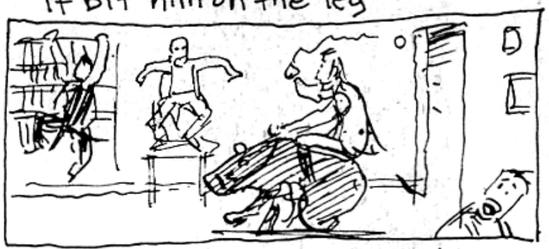
He fought dogs too. His effective method was to clamp his teeth over the dog's nose.



He liked dressing up as a highwayman and robbing his guests as they rode home after dinner.

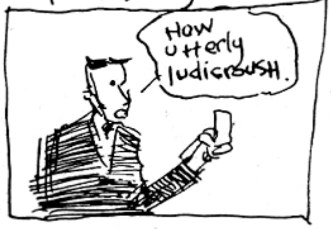


He once terrified his guests by riding in full hunting costume upon his pet bear into the drawing room. It bit him on the leg

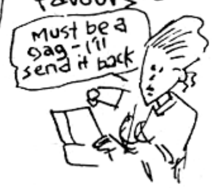


From about 1822 after the death of his first wife he was drinking 7 bottles of port a day

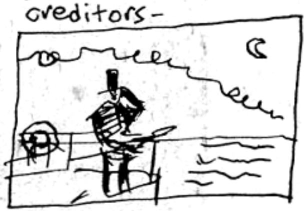
Heading for debt he was advised to keep his spending to 6,000 pounds a year


How utterly ludicroush.

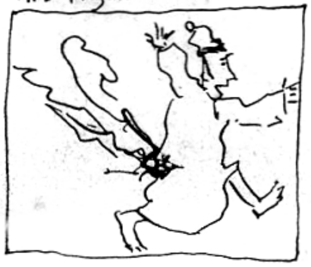
An incurable womaniser, he once sent a singer a cheque for 500 pounds for her favours -


Must be a gag - I'll send it back

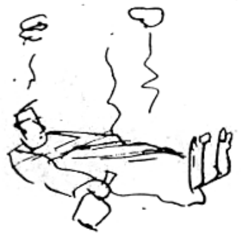
By 1830 he'd had to sell all his hounds, racehorses and land. He fled to France just ahead of his creditors -



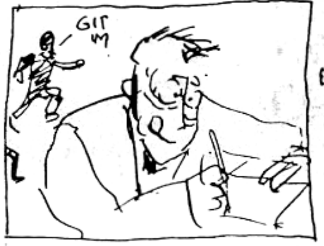
He had an attack of hiccups which he tried to frighten away by setting fire to his nightshirt -



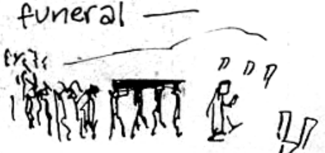
He might have recovered from the burning but he took to brandy to deaden the pain.



Persuaded to return to England to sign some legal papers, in his muddled state he went and was arrested.

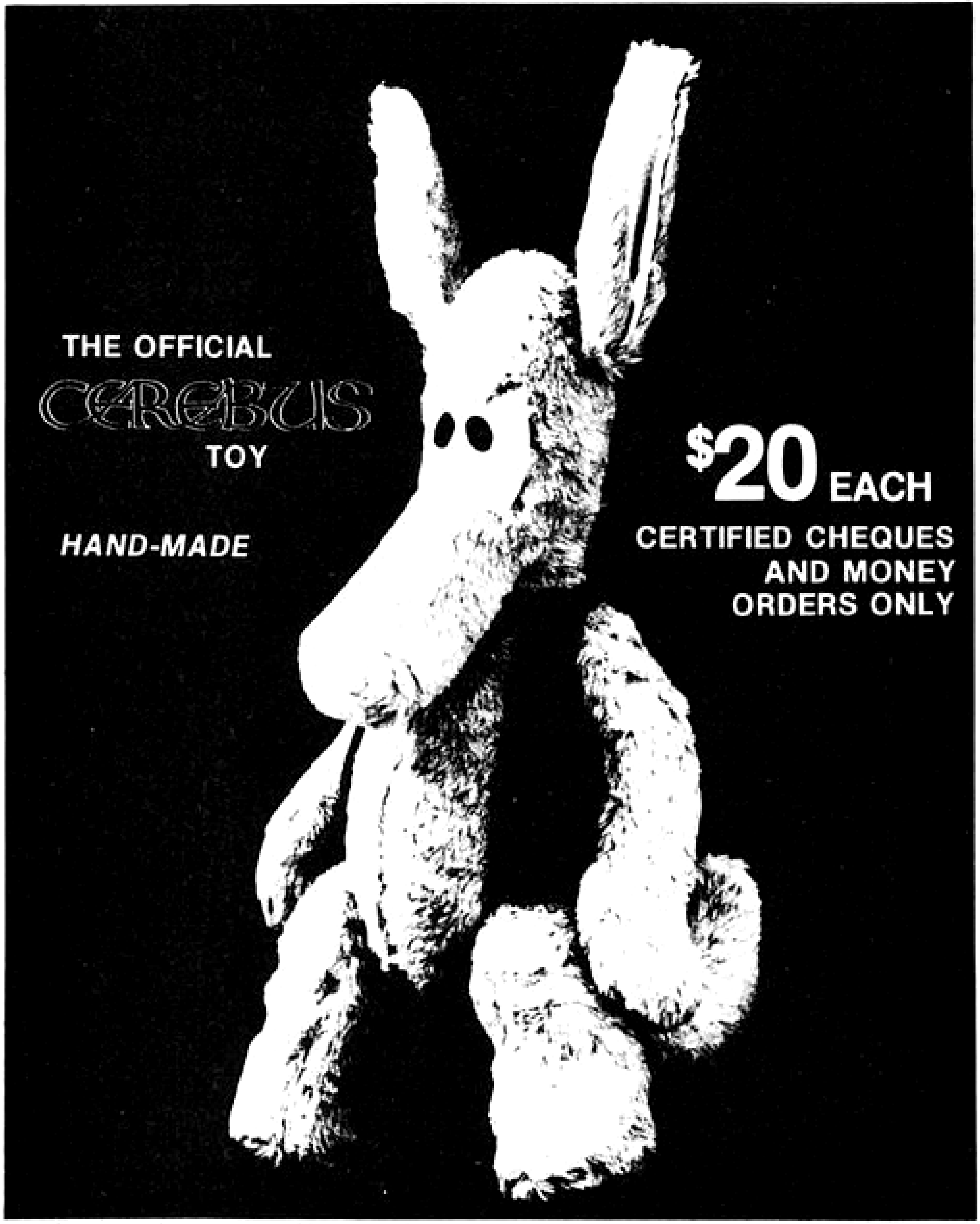


In and out of prison over the next few years, he died ill and only intermittently sane, aged 37, 3,000 attended his funeral —



Eddie Campbell Dec 88

SARAH HITCHENS


THE OFFICIAL
CEREBUS
TOY
HAND-MADE
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CERTIFIED CHEQUES
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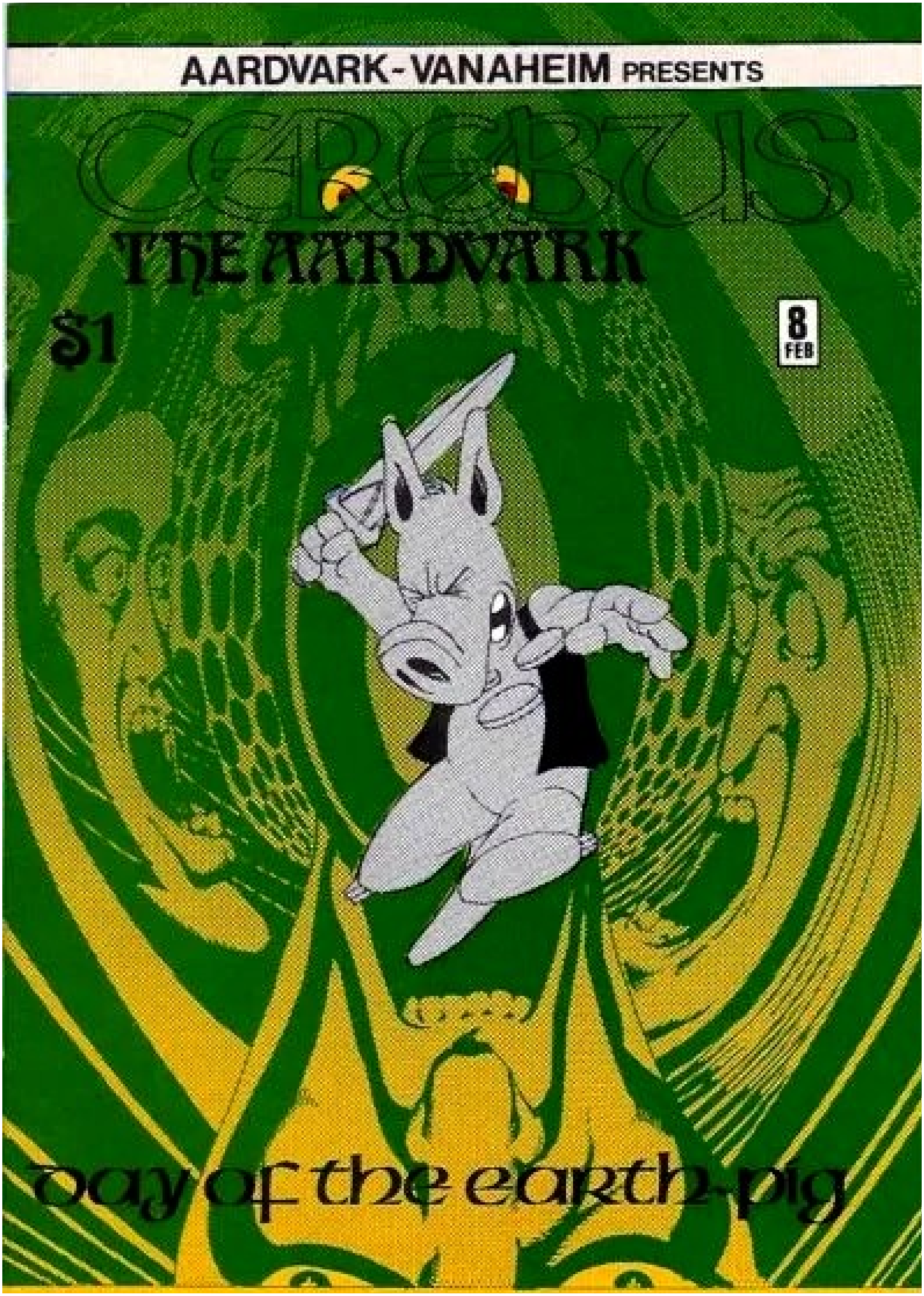
KITCHENER ONTARIO


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
THE AARDVARK
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FEB
day of the earth-pig

CEREBUS

It's editorial number eight and for once I have plenty to tell you about.

First of all, we are going to have to reprint issue number one. For those of you who can't get it where you are, ask your friendly supplier to start making inquiries. It will have a new cover as well as something special inside it besides the story from issue one.

Our circulation is up over four thousand now, so things are starting to look up.

Some other big news is we've been invited to two out of town (actually out of country) conventions. Dave's got more information on that on the letters page.

Our special, "The Aardvarkian Age" is a real in-depth history of Cerebus and the places he travels through. It won't be ready for a while yet, but when it is I'll let you know. Michael and Dave have been compiling quite alot of information and it should be really interesting. Included are three original Cerebus stories in text form with original illustrations by Dave. These stories should shed some light on the reason for all those times that mistaken identities have made Cerebus's life so interesting.

That's about it this time around. It seems to me that it's time to settle into your comfy-chair and catch up on your and my favorite aardvark and his newest adventure.

Deni

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CEREBUS No. 8 (February-March, 1979)

There is a large difference between issues 7 and 8.

I don't know if it's as obvious to other people as it is to me, but there is definitely a difference. I can almost see the pages of the issue sighing with relief as I thumb through it. The splash page and the top panel of page six were expressions of my own personality without having been filtered through someone else's style. This was around the time that I started developing a lighter touch to the pace of my stories. The plot seems to bounce along inside the panels. No longer restricted to seeing the world through Barry Smith-coloured glasses, I started seeing each panel as a link in a chain. My priority was no longer to copy Smith's pen-lines, but to use each drawing as a connecting fragment. It was like a dormant time-sense had leaped into my head from nowhere. It had been there all along of course, but it had been overruled most times by the part of me that was determined to be Barry Smith. The emphasis shifted from the finished art to the layout of the story. From cosmetic technique to narrative flow.

Like I say, it's obvious to me, anyways.

This was actually the issue when I first came up with the idea for issue 20 -- you can see it on pages three through six and pages eight and nine. When I finished drawing the curve on page three, I had this picture in my head of the hallucination panels sort of swirling through the whole book around all these ninety degree angle panels. By the time I was done page six, I was thinking of extending the idea for several issues, gradually having more and more of the swirling panels until the rest of the story was over-powered by them and I could do a whole issue of nothing but swirling black panels with cross-hatched patterns.

I chickened out of course. I was pretty daring by this point, but not *that* daring. I did a couple of more swirling panels (this time incorporating the real background in the swirling) and then brought the Earth-pig back to consciousness, with nary a backward glance of regret and proceded to try something that would eventually emerge as the form of No. 20: Talking Heads.

Talking Heads is a rock group. Talking Heads is also a term used for boring television. Talking Heads as a term in comics is in the same category as "hack": It is not a nice term. Especially for those of us doing Talking Heads material.

But I was in a daring mood, as I said. Daring enough to thumb my nose at convention and plunge into six pages of snappy repartee and Cerebus in chains. Doing something you really don't have the guts to do has a liberating effect. In this case, being able to do six pages of dialogue allowed me to write the ending for the story. I had been torn between having Cerebus stay with the Conniptins and having him escape at the earliest possible opportunity. I tried to reason it through -- he wasn't in the best of health and he had the guarantee of warm food and some shelter. On the other hand, these were blue ribbon jerks from his standpoint -- exactly the type of person Cerebus avoided like the plague. I worried about it for a while and then just decided to throw myself on the mercy of the court of fan opinion and let Cerebus wrestle with the dilemma in print.

I was making progress, but it was another twelve issues before I let the solid black and cross-hatching swirl away the ninety degree angle panels.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Denise and Dave:

After reading No. 6, I was inspired to write again. My friend and I are avid comic collectors and delve into 'underground', amateur and standard issue comics. The thing that impresses me most about Cerebus is that while major companies turn out comics by the thousands and need not worry about producing a classic with each issue, Cerebus continues to turn out appealing, exciting stories which make each issue a masterpiece. I don't know that you can truly classify Cerebus into a comics category. It clearly does not rank as an underground, and you are definitely not turning out an amateur mag, as both of these types of publications turn out stories with no continuity to speak of and so many artists take different shots at it that one cannot really relate. Mind you, I think these publications are great for exposing an artist's talents, but Cerebus has the continuity one can relate to.

As a collector, I mainly buy for artwork, and I am proud to place my 'Cerebus' collection alongside my Adams', Starlin's, Smith's Wrightson's and Byrne's, to name a few. As someone has already said, when you do broaden your horizons and hit the 'big time', please don't stop publishing 'Cerebus the Aardvark'. I can foresee a new classification system for comics even now. 'Super-hero', 'underground', 'amateur' and 'Cerebus' (Although not necessarily in that order). As you can tell, I'm kinda fond of that "killer-who-looks-like-a-bunny". Much luck in your marriage. If it turns out half as successful as Cerebus, I think you have yourselves a hit!

Tarim!
David R. Wooten,
808 Arbor Road,
Winston-Salem, NC
27104

Thank you David, for your comments. On the subject of broadening my horizons, I keep a careful watch on all comic books, overground and underground. At the moment, I can't think of any books that are not locked into their own narrow and confining view of what comics should be — from the endless repetition of Marvel and DC to the insufferable and self-conscious pseudo-intellectualism of many major alternative publishers. My own tastes run to the more substantial and cohesive art and story of the giants like Harvey Kurtzman and Will Eisner. Until a comics company emerges that is interested in solid-storytelling and parallel development of art and story by the same creator, I'll be doing all of my horizon-broadening in these pages. Stay tuned...

Dave:

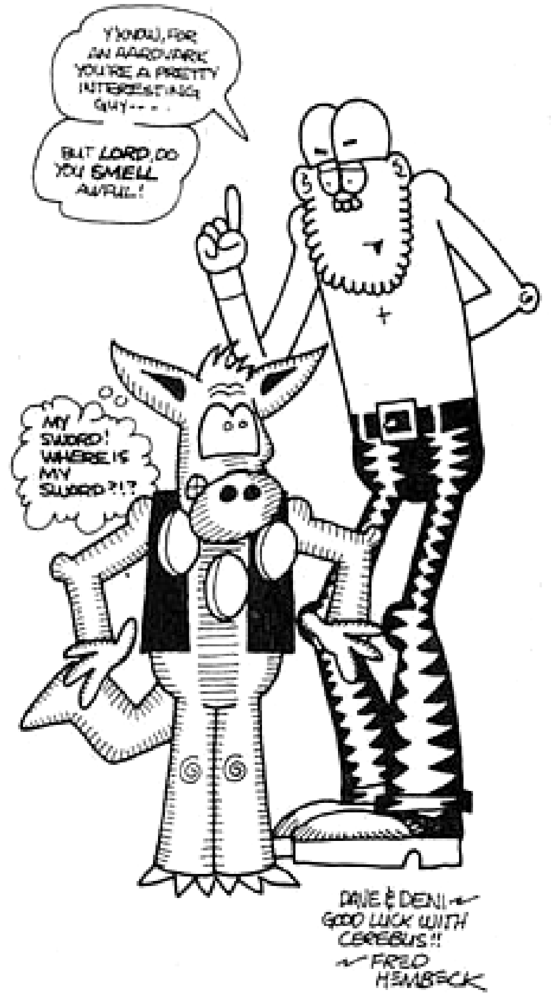
Thanks for sending me Cerebus 2-6 (two copies of No 6—?) and if you ever send any more, do me a favor and autograph 'em, okay? I have this strange hobby, y'see.

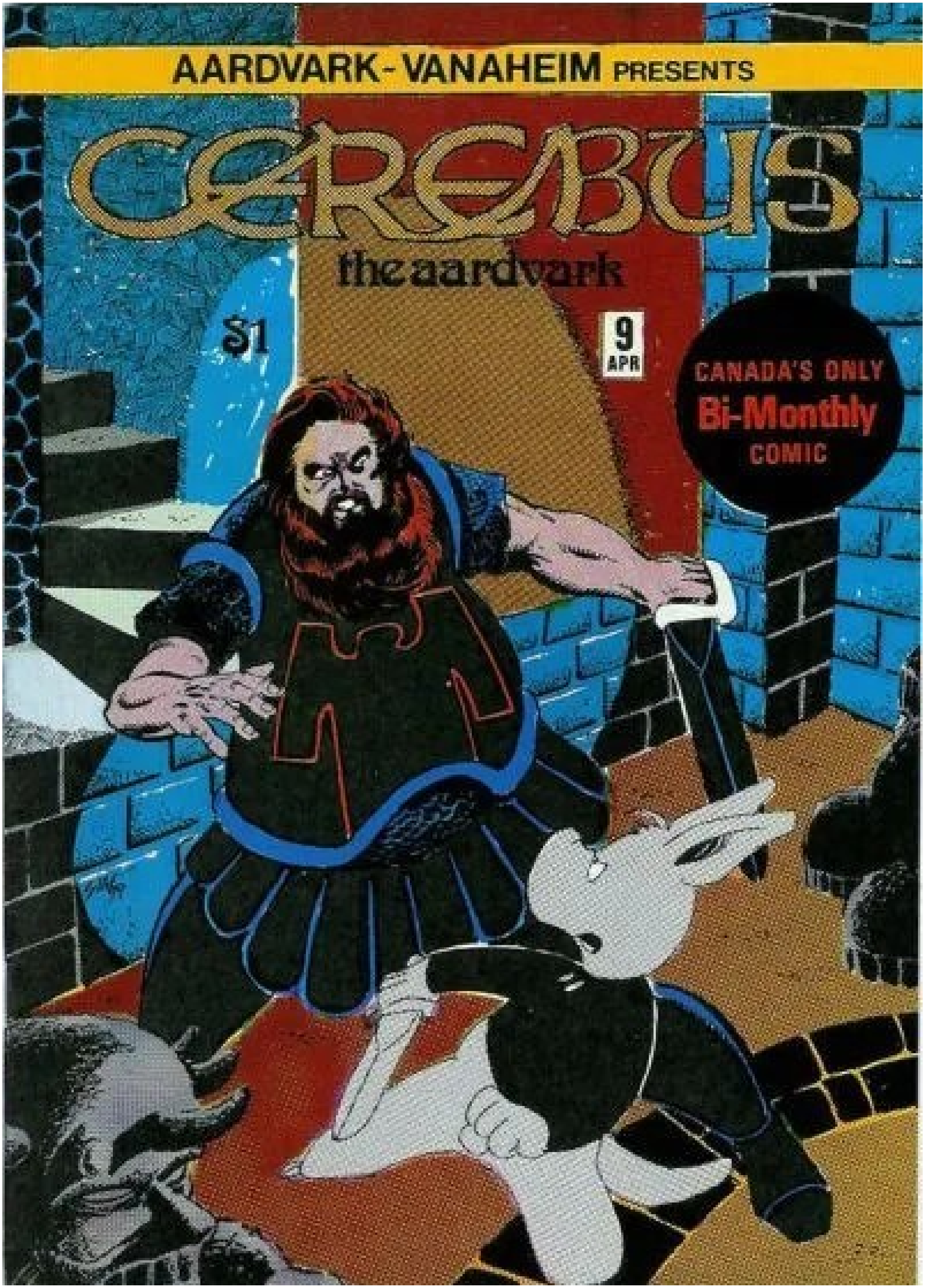
Fred Hembeck
199 Smith Ave.,
Kingston, N.Y. 12401

Ladies and gentlemen, Fred (I-work-for-DC-really) Hembeck, the only reason I still subscribe to THE BUYER'S GUIDE gets two points and a hearty chuckle for the below original illustration of our favourite aardvark. Enjoy.

NOTES

For those of you who haven't had a chance to meet Deni and myself at one of John Biernat's Sunday Cons in Toronto, we'll be making appearances at two conventions over the next year for sure as guests. The first is May 5 and 6 in Albany at TRI-CON courtesy of Randy A. Feldman. The second is the fifth annual ATLANTA CON August 10, 11 and 12 in Jimmy Carter country. An added treat is in store for people at the Atlanta Con with the appearance of my sister-in-law, Karen Loubert and her boyfriend Bob (Science-fiction-is-my-life) Rittinger. See you there, y'all.


Y'KNOW, FOR AN AARDVARK YOU'RE A PRETTY INTERESTING GUY-- . .
BUT LORD, DO YOU SMELL AWFUL!
MY SWORD! WHERE IS MY SWORD?!?
DAVE & DENI-- GOOD LUCK WITH CEREBUS!! --FRED HEMBECK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CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

This issue has been quite an experience for me. Not only have I enjoyed watching the story develop (and **that** was very much like watching someone in labour), but I actually helped in the production. Nothing fancy, just filled in large black spaces and put all the tone on. But as I never did anything like this before, it was quite an experience!!

You will probably notice that the story has a lot of twists and turns to the plot and an ending you'll never expect. (And don't sneak a look, it could take some of the fun out of the story!!)

As for the letters page ...... HMPH!!!!! ...... !!!!!! I think Cerebus says it all. Really, my little feelings are hurt!!! You're taking all the joy out of checking our morning mail. But enough said - I can tell when I'm not liked. You can **at least** read this story. But then, you didn't buy this for the editorial, did you?

Hey, I love you all, anyways (notice a few feelings of guilt for saying such nasty things to you?) But really, I do (even if you don't write).

Deni

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CEREBUS No. 9 (April - May, 1979)

This issue looks quite a bit different than any of the previous ones -- I don't know if it's as obvious to other people as it is to me (an occupational hazard of being the person who drew it, I've come to realize). There is a very stark quality to the black areas that didn't show up before.

I wish I could say that it was a conscious move on my part to a more graphic and less scratchy style of drawing, but alas, such is not the case. This issue was an experiment in sharing my work-load around to cut down on my drawing time dramatically.

My mouth absolutely begins to water whenever I think of something that might cut down on my drawing time dramatically. And in this case, coincidentally enough, the idea came from Gene Day. Gene around this time had hired his brother Dan to fill in his solid blacks, as well as adding the occasional texture lines, assisting on laying down the tone, erasing inked pages and just generally cutting down on his drawing time dramatically.

I didn't have a brother handy.

But I did have a wife.

Deni liked the idea a whole bunch, since she had wanted from the day I met her to help me out in any way she possibly could (bless her heart). I set to work on the first few pages, pencilling, lettering and then inking in outlines, marking little "x's" on the areas needing solid black and then turning them over to Deni who was also going to lay in the tone as specified.

It was a real vacation.

For a few days.

When the first few pages were done, I was not overly pleased with the way that they looked. I hemmed and hawed and did everything short of accusing Deni of redrawing the stuff behind my back. Being a patient sort, however, I decided that it was strictly a matter of getting used to the style of working and learning how to compensate for what little defects cropped up from time to time.

Things didn't improve.

I was at a complete loss to explain why things worked out better when I did the whole page myself and just didn't look right when someone else filled in the blacks. I mean black is black right? I considered diluting the ink that Deni was using in an attempt to soften the super-stark look before me.

It came as quite a blow when I finally realized what was wrong. I'm a "fixer".

All the way through the inking stage of drawing, I'm adding a little black here, a little black there. Cutting into black areas with white paint, then putting most of it back. Thickening lines and adding texture, putting tone on for a quick look, then stripping it off again and trying something else.

Whatever dreams I may have had of someday owning a studio full of people blacking in areas and pasting in tone were dashed in one moment of realization.

I was on my own.

Looking back on the issue to write this introduction, I am not quite as disheartened by the results. Considering that Deni practically drew the energy globes sequence single-handedly (I went in after and did the white spatter effects) looking at the ratio of black to white on the page, the sequence did not look that much different from what I would have done on my own. But the spotting of blacks on the other pages just could not be accomplished in outline to my satisfaction. It is perhaps worthy of note that Kim Thompson in his review of Cerebus in the Comics Journal found the "marble patterns in the scene with the Panrovian coarse and distracting". I can remember curdling a bit when I saw that page, ashamed to admit that the tonal pattern I had selected did not work at all. Added to my reluctance to ask Deni to pull up all of her hard work and replace it, the whole situation made for a very uncomfortable few weeks.

Moving away from the technical side to the content, you can tell that I very quickly became uncomfortable with Cerebus as Ruler. Here he was with an army of devoted followers and I couldn't wait to ditch them and get him off on his own. I anguished over the decision of how to handle this for some time, aware that the avid Cerebus readers were going to need a plausible explanation of his vacillating approach to leadership. The most obvious quality in his character to latch onto was his competence, combined with his impatience with incompetence. Clearly, he did not have the qualities needed in a leader. It was not quite enough, however, to have him just leave his troops behind and never go back to them. That was when I developed the ending sequence to the story. Cerebus' sudden appreciation of his position and his sudden enthusiasm for an alliance of his own making brings the reader into complete harmony with the story direction.

Cerebus No. 9 (cont'd)

Whatever reservations the reader might have had about the lone wolf being co-opted into a pack are swept aside by the sudden elation of imminent victory and snow-balling success. It was with a great deal of satisfaction that I took Cerebus and the readers on a roller coaster ride of hope for his future and then drew the tracks straight into a brick wall.

For those of you interested in background, Imesh is the city of Cerebus' adolescent years, the place where he studied magic under Magus Doran and first learned how to drink, gamble and raise hell. You can see from the size of the city why it was that Cerebus felt conquest to be a matter of troop strength and dedication to the cause. These northern "cities" are little more than military outposts surrounded by a single wall. Regularly sacked by barbarians or captured in the occasional border raid by a neighbouring tribe. Although this activity is not as wide-spread in the "Aardvarkian Age" as it was in the previous hundred years or so (largely attributable to it being bad for business, and hence frowned on by the emerging merchant class), it is virtually unheard of in the capital cities (like Iest, Beduin, Palnu, etc.) which have remained safe and sound for many years.

The story was also a study in the corrupting influence of power, since (as someone once said) power is not manifest unless it is power over some one. Even though my personal feelings about characters like K'cor border on complete revulsion, I still tried to build a certain amount of sympathy for his position and attitudes. Even Ronald Reagen likes puppies, right?

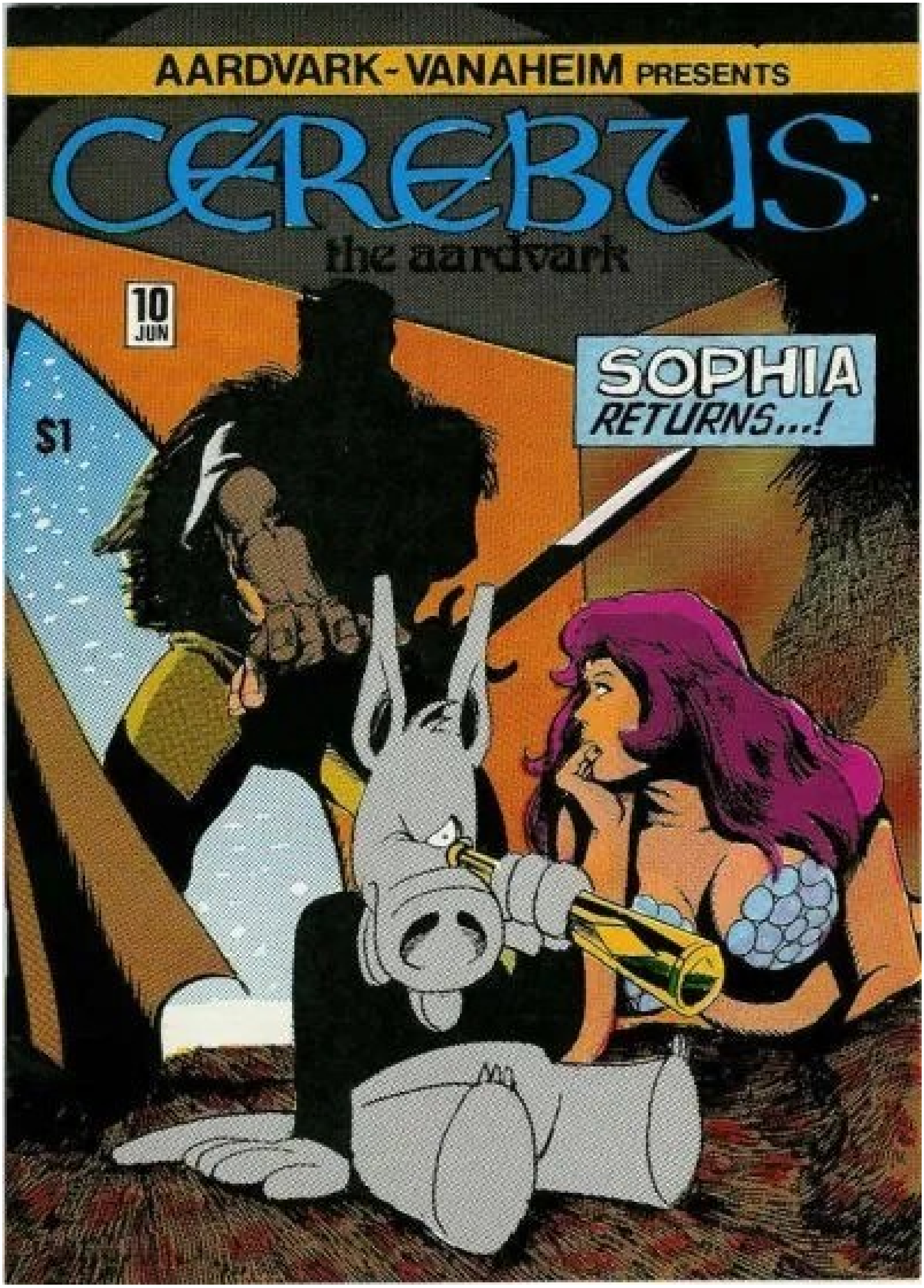
The major point of interest, for me though, was Cerebus' insidious seduction into the game of power itself and its bringing of him to the saddest of all possible points; where there was something to lose.

His first hard lesson in a long string to come.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

IF CEREBUS DOESN'T GET SOME LETTERS ABOUT *THIS* ISSUE ...
HE'S GOING TO GET MIGHTY CRANKY!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CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Since the last issue a few things have happened to Dave and I that I feel would be of interest to you.

First of all, we will be at the New York convention this summer along with Phil Seuling's Comic Art Convention in Philadelphia. Details on these cons are on the inside back cover.

Dave will be giving a slide show presentation about Cerebus at both of these two conventions, and at the Atlanta Con on July 27th, 28th and 29th. We both are hoping to talk to as many Cerebus fans as possible, so if you can make it to these cons we'd really like to see you there. Not to mention the fact that any positive support during the slide show would be appreciated greatly.

For myself, one of the largest reasons I'm looking forward to these cons is that I've never been to an American convention. I keep hearing how good they are, how great the fans are. Just writing about it, I can hardly wait to be there.

If you read the letters page you'll probably notice that Dave and I had the opportunity to meet Marshall Rogers in Toronto. What else can I say? The guy is super!

That about does it for this issue, except for one thing. I particularly liked the ending to this issue's story (no peeking) so I do recommend you settle down to it, like right now. See you next issue!

Deni

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CEREBUS No. 10 (June - July, 1979)

It was time for Red Sophia to return. Elrod had been back once already and hey, fair is fair, y'know. That's about as specious a bit of reasoning as you're likely to hear, but that was the reasoning behind it.

I liked being able to draw the little lady without feeling compelled to copy Barry Smith and Frank Thorne. That was another major consideration in bringing her back for another visit, since I hadn't had a chance to try drawing a female in my own style, which had been developing since issue seven. Besides it was a foregone conclusion that her marriage was not going to work out, being something of a suicidal enterprise for hubby.

Elrod and Red Sophia are very similar characters in their effect on the storyline of Cerebus. They are out of step with the procedings to a large extent, bordering on a schizophrenic disregard for the alternative realities involved. Compare Sophia's entrance in this issue with Elrod's in number seven. In both cases, the captions build a pulpish air of tension, reflecting Cerebus's mood. The reader prepares himself for gut-wrenching adventure right along with the Earth-pig and the grim realities to come, only to find himself in the midst of a grand farce. The question arises in each case of how they got there. We see that Cerebus has ridden long and hard to reach the Temple in number seven and that he has nearly exhausted himself in number ten in the harsh landscape. In comes Elrod on a pair of snowshoes, fit as a fiddle and there's Red Sophia in her chain-mail bikini, barely even aware that the temperature is a might brisk. They are at the opposite end of the spectrum from "accident-prone". They could fall backwards into a pile of shit and come up smelling like a rose.

This was also the first issue, where I consciously built tension between a number of characters by molding four individual points of view at complete odds with all others. Very little actually happens in the story, but I was beginning to lose my compulsion to change locales and situations simply for the sake of variety. Instead I was beginning to emphasize the personalities involved. The relationships between the characters became the priority and the framework. The backgrounds were just backgrounds. It was a minor shift in emphasis, but it was far more in keeping with my own nature; a writer who draws, as opposed to an artist who writes.

This was also the first time that Cerebus is shown to use any discretion whatsoever when it comes to a potential confrontation. It was natural to assume that at some point he would be forced to go a few rounds with the guard. The character is abrasive in the extreme and the reader feels almost cheated that no one takes a poke at the big goon. Practically speaking, however, Cerebus' course of action is the safest and the best in the long run. Discretion is not only the better part of valour, it is the essence of safety.

The situation was also, to a degree, autobiographical. I have never in my life been in a fight, and on a number of occasions, my sense of humour has been what saved me. That and being able to run fast.

This was Red Sophia's last appearance in Cerebus to date. There are a number of reasons for this. Kim Thompson's comment on the "unhealthy origin" of the Marvel character sums up my feelings pretty well. I was initially attracted to the book by Frank Thorne's work, having liked Frank's stuff from the time he was doing Korak and Son of Tomahawk for DC. I heard a great deal about the Sonja Show that he did at conventions and was intrigued by the occasional photograph or write-up one would see in fanzines or on the letters pages. When I first read one of the books, I have to admit to an almost total sense of disgust at the concept behind it. The qualities of sado-masochism, rapist as hero and woman as willing rape victim screamed at me from every panel. I didn't for a moment figure that some fourteen year-old boy was going to go out and defeat his girl-friend in battle for the privileges implied, but it seemed like something less than the ideal structure for an entertainment form.

Sophia was also intended as something of a tribute to Wendy Pini's interpretation of the character in the aforementioned Sonja Show, and finding out that she didn't like the character didn't help matters.

If she does return again, I will have to re-think the concept completely to try and make her at least a little more sympathetic. A gargantuan task that makes me feel I would be better served coming up with a new character altogether.

Those who worry that Red Sophia was another victim of Cerebus' double-cross at the end of this issue can put their minds at rest. Sophia, like Elrod is one of those survivors you

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Dave
I recently bought CEREBUS 1-6 (I hear there are more, but they haven't made it south yet) and read them all in a lump, not the best way to appreciate them. Nonetheless, they clearly improved from 1 to 6. Humor increased steadily (a good thing in a funny animal comic, even a s&s funny animal comic) with a dip at 5, and so did the drawing quality. And Cerebus has mellowed somewhat since 1 and 2 - didn't even pause in No. 4 to remove a few pieces of Elrod before escaping - which is all to the good. (Though falling in love did terrible things to his temper) I'd say that No. 6 is distinctly the best of the lot. Not only is it the funniest, but you even managed some decent pathos - the earth-pig who will never know what he's lost, and the dancer who will. (Denise has a melancholy taste in wedding presents; may your relationship be better-starred!) Doesn't seem that there's room in the Aardvarkian Saga for Jaka, which is a pity: women who can open their hearts to aardvarks are a rare commodity. (I do not include among them a certain nutbar who seemed more interested in opening her thighs.)

On the negative side ... Cerebus's annoying habit of switching between 'I' and 'Cerebus' for no visible reason is most noticable in No. 6 because Jaka does it too. More bothersome, you skimped somewhat on the non-farcical parts of the plot. E.G., who was that guy bleeding at the beginning (I can make guesses) and why was he so anxious to tell his secret (I can't imagine - except to set off the plot, of course)?

Miscellaneous thoughts: Good idea, keeping Cerebus the only animal around. 'Cept in flashbacks, of course; I don't know if it's impossible to give him a past, but I hope so. (Is he 26?) The word 'excellent' contains no A.

Philip Michael Cohen,
726 Golf Course Road,
Aliquippa, Pa. 15001

How about this: The guy was a renegade Priest of the Black Sun and realized that someday the Priest would find the hidden gold and use it for furthering their death-worshipping ways. Giving the word to a complete stranger was preferable to their running across it one day by accident. Fair enough?

I don't know. Is he twenty-six?

Dear Cerebus,
You are a cute little aardvark. Really, you are; whenever I see you, I have this sudden and irrepressible urge to grab you, cuddle you and scratch behind your little aardvark ears, crooning John Denver songs as we watch re-runs of **The Waltons** together. You remind me of a teddy bear I had once named Cutsey Woodles - same little button eyes and all.

But seriously, folks, I really do enjoy CEREBUS THE AARDVARK, snatching up and hoarding each and every issue as it comes out. You do fine work, and you have more than enough reason to be proud. I just thought I'd show Cutsey Woo--er, CEREBUS - that not receiving letters can sometimes be a blessing in disguise. Am I forgiven, you sweet little aardvark, you?

Kent G. Orlando
4336 Prescott Rd.
Nashville, Tenn. 37204

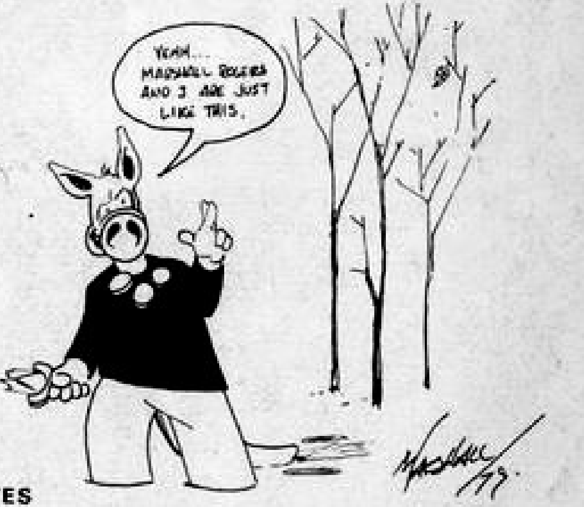
You'll have to stand in line, fella. If I had a nickel for every person who wanted to grab him, cuddle him, and sing John Denver songs to him, I wouldn't have to draw comic books for a living. ***The Waltons*** *part is a new one on me, though. You must be a sickee.*

Dear Dave and Deni
Cerebus No. 7 was great as ever. But one small complaint. It's probably a great kick for you to get a "professional" contribution for your covers (a la Frank Thorne this issue) but I buy Cerebus for your work. Actually that puts it mildly. Although I respect the man's credentials and the way he spent his own time to promote Red Sonja, I can't help but feel that his work was the stake through Sonja's heart that ended Red's mag. Next time if there's a choice between Frank Thorne's cover and a big blank space, save the ink.

Keep up the good work. I rank Cerebus up there with X-MEN and ELFQUEST as my "must read" favorites.

Ed Boner
819 W. Auburn
Rochester, Mich. 48063

Talk about your schizophrenic response to a letter. The ARTIST Dave Sim wants to have your taste bronzed. The FAN-of-Frank-Thorne Dave Sim would like to punch you out. All kidding aside, I had expected that everyone would be clamoring for me to turn over the covers to Mr. Thorne on a permanent basis. Even those who like Frank Thorne's work, however, expressed a preference for a complete Dave Sim book. It's hard to stay humble, folks.


YEAH... MARSHALL ROGERS AND I ARE JUST LIKE THIS.

NOTES
There is a long story that goes with the accompanying Marshall Rogers sketch. Unfortunately, space doesn't permit me to go into it here. Suffice it to say, Marshall (Mr. Rogers is the name of a kiddie show in Canada) made a recent Toronto convention a real buzz for Deni and I. Aside from placing third in the Berni-Wrightson look-alike contest last year, he is also a sweetheart of a guy and I have it on good authority that he knows Neal Adams personally. If the guy who got the Cerebat sketch (you can just picture it, can't you?) is reading this, I am begging you to send me a xerox.

The next issue of Cerebus will be released (if I don't have a nervous breakdown) at the 1979 New York Comic Art Convention. Check the inside back cover for details, and Deni and I hope to see you there.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

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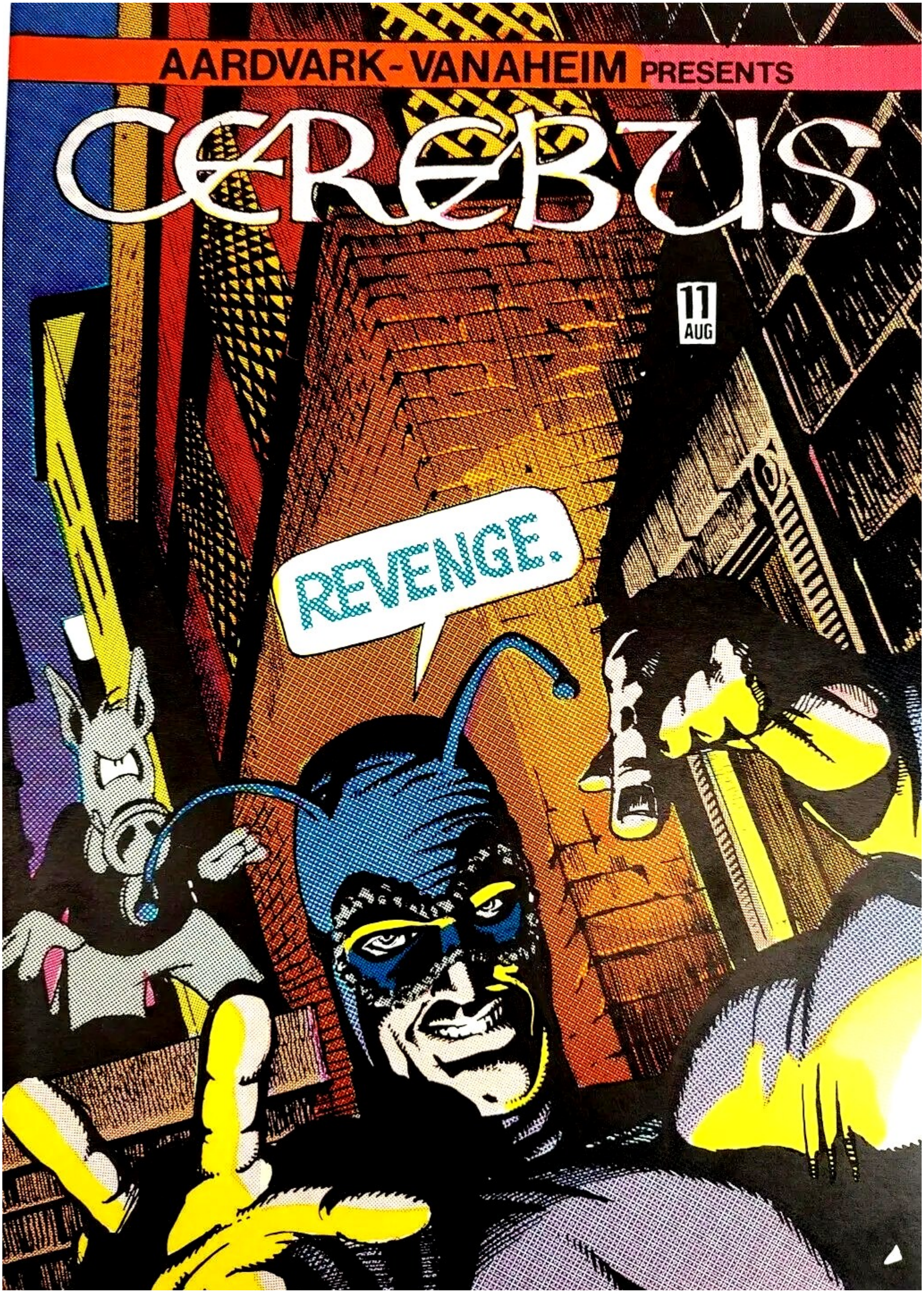

CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Issue number eleven has been a landmark issue for us. Reaction to Cerebus is really starting to flow in, as you can see by the expanded letters page. People at conventions are also starting to react to Cerebus with more familiarity. For me, that makes talking to people so much easier.

By the time this issue is out, we will be back from, or at, the July conventions in New York, Philadelphia and Atlanta. At this point of writing, I'm still wondering what to expect.

Much has been happening in the way of Cerebus products. If you saw our ad a few issues back for a stuffed toy of Cerebus, there have been a few changes-mostly that I make them now (so you can just order them directly from this address), and the price is now ten dollars instead of twenty. They are about a foot tall, including the ears. A products page will be added in future issues as someone else is making for us little statues of Cerebus, I think they're like paperweights - we haven't seen them yet.

The art in this issue is a bit of a change for Dave. He spent more time and effort on pencils, layouts and inks than he has before, and in different directions. I feel that it shows, and that you'll be seeing more of this kind of effort in future issues of Cerebus. That is, if Dave survives the conventions, slide shows and a few new things he's working on come September.

The newsletter is definitely going to start. When is hard to tell. I've kept up a list - so anyone who wrote and said they would be interested will be on that list. Let me know if you'd like to be, okay?

I've got to get going or this will never get to the printers. This page is **always** done last, and at the last minute. Enjoy the story for it's fast-paced and sure to keep you laughing!

I'll see you in issue 12!!

Deni

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CEREBUS No. 11 (August - September, 1979)

Marshall Rogers again.

Same convention. Same conversation. Except this time the topic of conversation wasn't materials or techniques. This time the subject was Batman. Excuse me -- THE Batman.

There is perhaps no bigger The Batman fanatic than Marshall Rogers. He also has his own singular view of how the character should be handled and no other way quite measures up. Marshall Rogers talking about The Batman, projecting this gut-wrenching motivation he sees in the Bruce Wayne/Batman split personality is as nice a piece of theatre as you're likely to find at a comic book convention.

Simply put, he sees the Batman as a sicko -- off the deep end. This otherwise normal millionaire who every night starts to slowly metamorphose into this deeply disturbed Figure of the Night. There's a part of him that doesn't want to put the costume on and go out in that damn rain and wind, but it's, like, the costume keeps screaming "put me on! put me on! You're The Batman." Once the costume is on, he's not even vaguely human in disposition. Every evil-doer becomes Joe Chill and the demon has to be excorcised. All these years and every night, he has to relive that horrible moment when Joe Chill stepped from the shadows and .... You get the idea.

Heady stuff, indeed.

It started me thinking about the whole basis of The Batman Legend. Marshall talks jokingly about doing a treasury sized team-up between The Batman and Captain America. The Batman slinking around alleyways, shoulders hunched, shadows everywhere, and his cape up over his face. Hsss. And here comes Cap bounding along, all red white and blue; the neon sign of super-heroes -- about as innocuous as the Macy's Parade coming through your bathroom.

And it's true. Batman -- heh heh sorry -- The Batman is the perfect counterpoint to Superman and the boys. They would clean up a crime, but stick around to sign a few autographs, kiss a few babies. Make nice on the good people. The Batman didn't want anyone to know he was there. Break their heads, kick a few asses and then get away before anybody shows up with (gaahh) strong lights, flashbulbs. Dark. Find some dark and curl up in it. Wrap your cape around you. And keep your eyes peeled for any of those murderous, thieving scum that might happen along.

Hsss.

Once I had that, the story just about wrote itself. The biggest problem was trying not to do it too literally. No kidding. By the time I had seen the Sarah Bernhardt of comics do three performances (last complete show: 1:00 a.m.) I was just about ready to do an all-drama issue of Cerebus. That was when I started adding a few of my own touches. I started wondering "What if Bruce Wayne is a nutbar too?" What if he didn't remember being The Batman. He just woke up every day and there was another twenty grand in a pile at the foot of the bed. Gold teeth ripped from criminal mouths, negotiable bonds from a jay-walking industrialist. I mean if you're going to kick ass, why not turn a profit? Hm?

Hsss.

The "hsss" by the way is a direct steal from Jules Feiffer's Hostileman that appeared in Playboy, a strip I consider one of the best essays on super-heroes ever written. It fit The Batman to a "t".

It was with the greatest sense of great that I realized I wouldn't be able to use the name. It had become such an integral part of the whole concept, that I felt cast adrift. I finally opted for the most disgusting critter I could think of. I even had an origin sequence in mind that had to be scrapped because of space limitations (you'll notice that the story is a wee bit crammed in). "Hss. Criminals are a superstitious and cowardly lot, so my disguise must make them toss their cookies." Cockroach crawls across his sandwich. Gluckkkk. "That's it! A cockroach ... I'll be a Cockroach."

Hsss.

This issue marked a major turning point in a number of ways.

Although I still hadn't mastered it, the pen and brush were already adding a new dimension to the pages. I always wondered how Berni Wrightson got those wood grains so thin.

It was also the first big city that Cerebus had ventured into in the series (lest in No 6, but he stuck mostly to the lower class areas that were essentially the same as the cities of his youth). The merchant takes him into the nicer areas (against his nature, as seen by page one) and circumstances keep him there. His resourcefulness takes a turn for the better, as he runs his first scam of any great proportion, realizing that you can get anyone to do anything if you just push the right buttons. He doesn't realize of course that it's a long road to travel, as seen by

Cerebus No. 11 (cont'd)

the trouble he gets into in later issues with his cleverness. there is a recurring theme to these manipulations; it's not what the aardvark says, it's how he says it. Even though the Cochroach doesn't know what a condominium is, he is an instant convert to the cause. It takes a very strong and secure personality to say no to Cerebus when he's in top form.

It also established the personality of The Cockroach that would remain through his other appearances. He needs someone to pull the strings; whether it's Cerebus, President Weisshaupt, or Astoria. His freelancing days ended when he found the cause he was looking for; raising up the poor and helping them to live like good and decent folk. He and Green Arrow would get along fine.

The first introduction I wrote for this story was a lengthy dissertation on the nervous breakdown I suffered after this issue was finished. It ran to about twice the length of this one, at least, but in the end, it sounded like what it was; a self-serving rationalization of a very insane couple of weeks. I realized when I had it done, that my intention had been primarily to reassure everyone reading it that it wouldn't happen again. Including me. It was the culmination of many different threads in my life coming together at once. Personal stuff, professional stuff, problems, ambitions, accomplishments and failures. Writing that introduction was a very therapeutic exercise, but the final product was pretty dull.

When Kevin Davies of MIRIAD did the interview with me, he asked me if I could have avoided the nervous breakdown, a question I really didn't consider too extensively until I saw it again in print. I don't think I could have, and in many ways, it came at exactly the right time. It was a warning that I am only human and it was an indication to me of just how fragile human can be. I've learned to accept only as much pressure as I can comfortably handle, and to keep my own feelings as the primary focus for my decision-making. Talking to people like Wendy Pini, I began to realize that the people attracted to success (and success is the honey for a specific kind of fly) can bleed you white if you let them, all with the best of intentions.

I realized writing the introduction that I was trying to help anyone who might find themselves in the same situation I did. I was hoping in some way to reach anyone who might be feeling themselves losing control -- babbling endlessly about nothing, swinging from elation to depression and back in a matter of minutes. Unfortunately, it's a pit that you either climb out of or slip into permanently. But the answers have to come from inside.

Enthusing about Marshall Rogers, The Batman, and the pleasure I can get out of a steel point barely a half-inch in length and a bottle of ink, rather than rehashing a dead end period of my life, is one of those answers.

For me.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Denise and Dave:

I'm coming in as a rather late discoverer of your CEREBUS THE AARDVARK comics. Actually, I read 2 & 3 almost a year ago, but the shop I got those at never got any others and I assumed the magazine had ceased publication. I've just now attended an otherwise-dead s-f convention where a dealer had the entire set up to 8, so at last I've learned what I've been missing.

Considering how tenuous the supplies of CEREBUS are in Southern California, I'd like to get on the mailing list you're compiling so I'll be informed when THE AARDVARKIAN AGE and any other items are available.

Eight issues on a regular schedule - with this type of magazine, that's almost as unusual as the high quality of CEREBUS itself.

Best wishes for continued growth.

Fred Patten,
11863 West Jefferson Blvd.,
Culver City, California, 90230

Thank you for your kind words. All products will be mentioned in Cerebus as they become available. At the moment, final plans for a newsletter are still a ways off, since there are a lot of things I would like to cover in the newsletter and it's going to take a while for a lot of the elements to come together. I'll try to have more to say about it next issue.

Deni,

I'm not one to write to magazines or comic books to tell them how much I like them. As a matter-of-fact, it has to be a DAMN good magazine! As if you haven't already guessed, I think CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is DAMN good!

I enjoy reading Cerebus 100%. I think the art is great, the stories and writing are excellent, and the character of Cerebus beautifully exhibited. There is only one other magazine I admire more (or equally); HEAVY METAL. I think you two make up a very high goal for all the sci-fi magazines and other lesser publications.

Keep up the fantastic work, and my friend and I will follow that earth-pig to the end of the Eshtahnin Wilderness!

Behind you all the way,

Brad Wise,
700 E. Smith St.,
California, Mo.,
65018

Be sure and pack a lunch if you're going to follow the earth-pig that far. It's a long way between restaurants.

Hi Dave and Deni,

Just a few words to let you know how much I enjoy the indomitable Cerebus.

I have the first nine issues and feel that 7 was your stellar effort - great artwork with very original panel angles and a hilarious storyline. May Cerebus reach 100!

How about this wild thought - Cerebus is time-warped to the Montreal Forum right in the middle of the Stanley Cup play-offs and duels Guy Lafleur (with hockey sticks of course).

Or he stumbles into the Bronx Zoo, meets a lovely female aardvark and -?????

Keep the beloved Earth-pig's uncanny deeds a-coming!

W.R. Gold,
711 Walton Avenue,
Bronx, New York, 10451

Thanks a lot. Now I have to come up with new plots for issues 14 and 15.

Dear Dave and Deni,

Cerebus never ceases to amaze me. The art is absolutely fantastic, with an intelligent use of black. The style is original and fresh, and the various angles used are well-dispersed throughout the book.

The plots are equally incredible. They're well-paced and innovative, and Cerebus perfectly parodies Conan. Supporting characters are also well-done, adding well balanced variety with their various oddities.

The art and scripts blend smoothly, to create some of the best comics ever,

And best of all, there's no overly-endowed women wearing disgusting costumes!

Peace,

Mark Browning,
430 Vassar Ave.,
Berkeley, California
94708

Hereby resolved; Cerebus will only feature under-endowed women in disgusting costumes or overly-endowed women in conservative costumes. Who says there's no integrity in comic books?

There is no helping comparing Cerebus the Aardvark to Howard the Duck. They are the same in the ways that the first few issues had a uniqueness about them that made them fun and very enjoyable to read and reread.

Both are pokes at the characteristics of comics. This is where they start to differ as well. Howard, after a while, began to rely on his adventures to get laughs, the gags. We all know what's happening to Howard now. But Cerebus is into its second year and still the same type of story is being written and working. Comparing 9 to 1, you'll see a noticeable resemblance in story type, even though I doubt it was intentional. Cerebus tries to loot a fortress ruled by some tyrant and battles many nemises before taking on the tyrant.

Another difference between Howard and Cerebus is Howard is getting nowhere relying on non-fan support for survival, while Cerebus is bought by fans. I think they will keep Cerebus going, even if they can't help Howard.

Make mine ... Aardvarkian?

Ken Willis,
726 Cooper Street,
Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.
P6C 4W2

As far as I'm concerned, there are only two groups who are of any significance in comics - the people who create them and the comics fans. Publishers should be people who know the best way to get the creator's work directly to the fans. We're working on it, folks.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W6

Dear Dave, Deni and Michael:

Well, I promised you guys a letter and by Ghod, here it is. I can't think of anyone better than CEREBUS to receive this, the first "fan letter" of my life.

I sit here in front of my typewriter with CEREBUS 1-10 arrayed in a neat pile on my desk. I have read all of the damn things through from cover to cover for about the fourth time, and I still find myself unable to really say anything beyond "WOW! GREAT!!! MORE!!! MORE!!!"

Something about Cerebus gets me - I'm not quite sure what, but I suspect that it is due to a combination of factors. Here are my general (and hopefully, constructive) comments about the things I liked.

The first is the writing. The stories flow nicely, with text, dialogue and art merging smoothly into an integrated whole. Occasionally, I found the story powerful enough to overshadow the manic humour inherent in the idea of a barbarian aardvark dealing with barbarian humans. The obvious example here is 2, CAPTIVE IN BOREALA. If we consider the story as a whole, it seems obvious (at least to me) that with very minor changes, it could have been the tale of any sullen, over-muscled barbarian-type - and it would have been reasonably good as a serious story. As a humorous story, with the central character an aardvark, the ideas literally take wing and fly.

Incidentally, I may be dense, but I still don't see why the succubus wasn't able to take the aardvark's soul unless a) he doesn't have one, or b) human and aardvark souls are located in differing psychic locations?

The art is good, but I agree with the reader who says that it is still evolving. I look forward to the day when the art is not "merely" good, but consistently superb.

The best thing about the book is the humour. I note that you haven't really poked fun at anything other than the genre of "Sword and Sorcery" stories; the nice thing about CEREBUS is that you can say anything about anything. (In this vein, the line about "...women being raped...children molested...food prices skyrocketing..." in 10 was just pricelesss.)

In my humble opinion, the high point of the entire series to date has been 6, "The Secret". Pages 8, 12 and 16 especially sent me into near hysterics. This is no mean feat, when you consider that Mr. Spock is one of my heroes, and that I can claim a fairly valid reason to be inscrutable.

I confess that I am somewhat torn about "The Secret". On the one hand, I desperately want to see a sequel with a happy ending to the most unlikely love affair ever conceived; on the other hand, I have the nagging feeling that any sequel might cheapen or lessen the original story.

A question that arises due to "The Secret" and the Red Sophia stories: does Cerebus have intense sexual longings for luscious female-type aardvarks who are so conspicuously absent from his life? This is a question which is not unimportant - the answer may well contain the reason why he is so bad-tempered.

A question which I hope you will answer some day is: how is the world of Cerebus related to our world, if at all? Or, stated in other terms, at what point in history (or prehistory) does the Aardvarkian age occur?

And finally, will Cerebus ever meet his figurative father? You know, the big fellow, black-haired, sullen-eyed, who came out of the bleak northlands to tread the jewelled thrones of Earth beneath his sandaled feet?

Best regards,
Do-Ming Lum
363 Montrose Avenue,
Toronto, Ontario
M6G 3G9

I'm afraid I only have room to answer your last question. No - I don't have any plans for Cerebus to meet up with Ronald Reagan.

Dear Cerebus,

Today I got my first copy of your fabby comic.

For years, I've been obsessed with AARDVARKS, so you can imagine my delight at seeing one as the hero of a comic book. A sword and sorcery style comic at that!

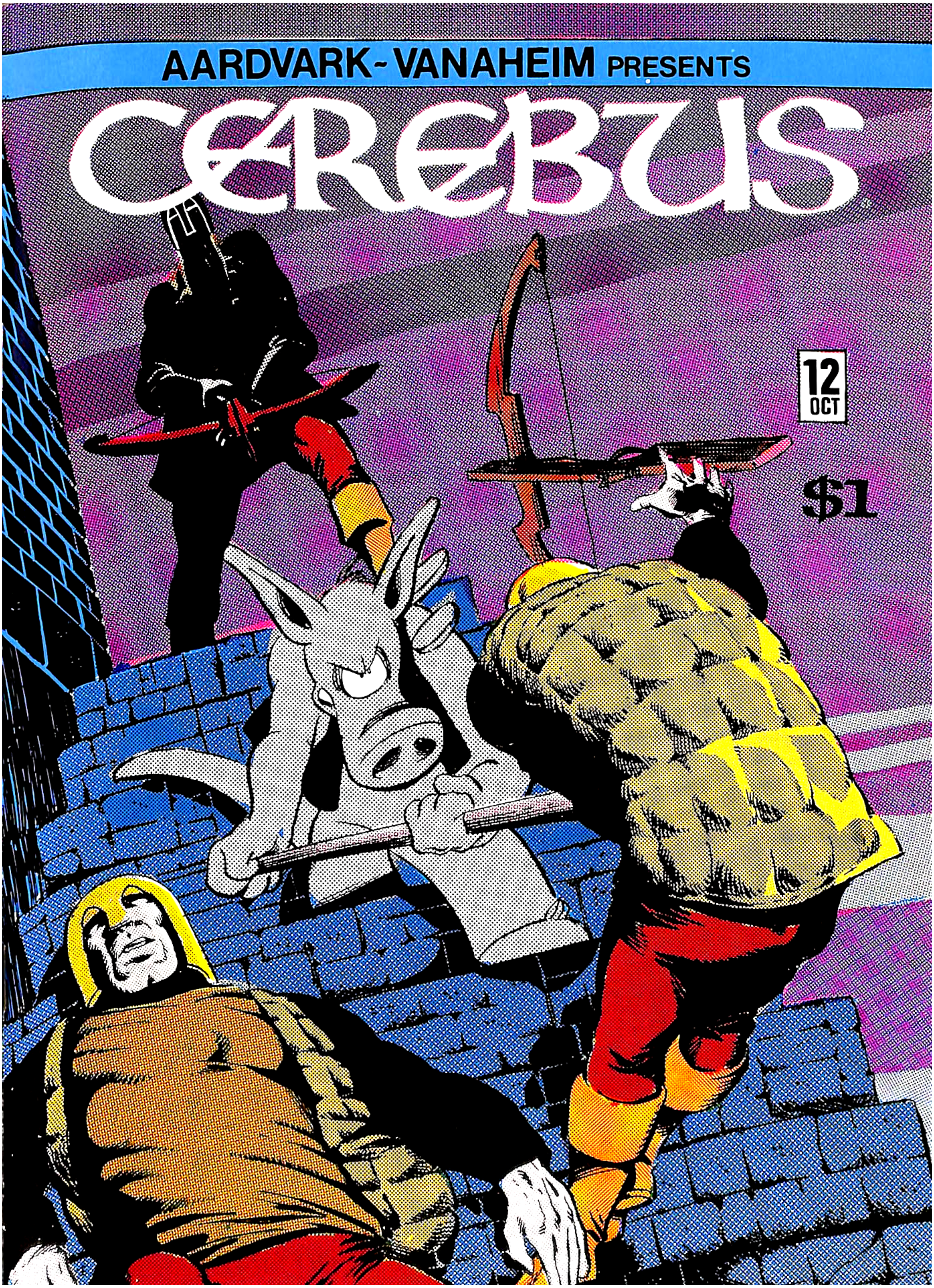
So, despite the ridiculous import price, I bought it. The copy I've got is 9 (and the ending IS fantastic). It will probably be the last copy I get unless you can help me. You see, I doubt very much if I could find a regular supplier here in the UK. I wondered whether you could send me details of a possible mail order supply? (Not a subscription, I couldn't afford the initial expenditure!)

I'd also be interested in copies of issues 1 to 8 which I have missed out on.

Are all your adventures Sword and Sorcery or do they vary?

David Elson,
55 Rullerton Road,
Wallasey, Merseyside,
England

These are the kind of letters that make me wish I had a bottomless stack of each issue so I could go around handing out complete sets to everyone in the boonies. Howzabout one of you wonderful Cerebus fans out there set up something with David. Help him put an Earth-pig in his life.


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
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CEREBUS

A Word From the Publisher

So much has happened between issue eleven and issue twelve that it may be hard to put it all in.

As you will read in the letters page, Dave had a nervous breakdown after issue eleven. It probably had something to do with the fact that he did issue ten and eleven back-to-back. That's too much work for anyone!

Wanting Dave to have some time to recuperate, I went to the New York Con alone. Everybody there was very helpful and the fans were tremendous. Dave joined me in Philidelphia and from there we went home for about a week and then went down to Atlanta, Georgia for their con.

Atlanta was the biggest surprise! We didn't figure there was much of a following "down south" but were we ever wrong! The organizers of the con were great - the fans were fantastic. We even met a guy whose name is Elrod (can you believe it?) and someone told me that he is forming a fan club. A CEREBUS fan club. Unbelievable! I'll tell you, southern hospitality has me hooked!!

Coming back from the cons and going back to work can be a let-down, and after those three big cons we really had a hard time getting started. A few things did help, like the letters you'll see in the letters page.

We decided it was time to move up in life, so Dave now has a studio separate from the apartment. It's big, but I think that he'll grow into it.

I'm not going to say much about this issue. It has some nice surprises that I wouldn't want to spoil. But don't let that slow you from reading it! Probably the best thing you could do right now is start on the page opposite this and read on through.

Enjoy!

Deni

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CEREBUS No. 12 (October - November, 1979)

As I said in the last introduction, I crammed a fair bit of the story into issue eleven. I think I wasn't much past page ten when I realized that I would just have to bring the character back so that all the little bits of funny business (or some of them anyway) that I had snipped from the finished story wouldn't go to waste.

Foremost among these was "Cerebus as Robin." Marshall Rodgers' ideas had gotten me thinking about The Batman as good material for an opera -- tragedy on a grandiose scale, emotions squirting all over the stage. The Robin part of the legend is especially evocative in this context. The morbid figure of the Batman, consumed by his own unhappiness, decked out in a black shroud, seeking only the lowest, vilest denizens of the great city, surrounded and immersed in a world devoid of pity and compassion. Until a small boy, suffering the same tragedy, touches something in this Darknight Wraith...

Heady heady stuff stuff, indeed indeed.

The nice thing about tragedy is that it is so closely linked to comedy. Again, the sequence practically wrote itself.

I remember this issue for a number of reasons. We moved my studio out of the apartment -- scratch that. We decided. Deni moved the studio out of the apartment. I went to visit Gene Day (I had to draw the issue, didn't I? Well, didn't I?). There is something about visiting Gene and working around him that brings out the absolute best in me. It is a strange feeling sitting somewhere else, working on a story. The pages don't look the same as they would if you were drawing at home. I don't know how I can say that for certain. But it is true. Even writing a story in a different place gives it a whole different quality. On the art side it contributed to there being more of a caricature quality to the drawing. About the only thing I regret on this issue is the decision to use duotone board (art board pre-printed with two tonal patterns, one light and one dark, each brought out by a separate developing fluid). It tended to make the artwork incredibly muddy in appearance. I had the story finished to the point where Cerebus is about to jump through the window, when a phone call from Deni came. The new studio was ready.

All the way back to Kitchener, I couldn't wait to see it. At long last, I was going to have a real, honest-to-gosh-bye-honey-I'm-going-to-work place of business.

When I finally saw it, my heart sank.

It looked like an indoor football field with a couple of pieces of furniture sticking up here and there. It was like someone was playing a bad joke on me. What was missing? Nothing. It was just a larger room that I had had. All those months of crying about my lack of space, my cramped quarters, my burning need for a little elbow room. Instant karma.

I did the page of Cerebus jumping through the window that night. Alone in a six-story office building built around the turn of the century. In the middle of a football field. No telephone. No T.V. No refrigerator. I had traded a stunning view of Queen Street and the lights of the city from a picture window on the fourteenth floor for a large chunk of glass embedded in unfinished cement looking out on rooftops that would've made Marshall Rogers or Frank Miller positively drool. Page two, panel one, Cruddy rooftops, Daredevil poised to leap.

Gaah.

That studio lasted until I was ready to begin issue seventeen. It gradually filled up. An armchair when we bought new furniture for the apartment, longer shelves, a standing drawing table. We put twenty-two nails on one wall in two rows of eleven and hung clips on them so I could have the pages in front of me while I was working on the issue.

The ending to this issue is a significant event in the aardvark's life. He fails again, miserably, in his attempt to get something for nothing. This time period of one failure after another very much reflected my view of my own life. Every time it looked like Cerebus might be starting to take off and become a going concern, something would happen to make us both feel that we were back at square one.

It wasn't that way of course. Just taking our progress over these four issues, our position became solider with each one. I got invited to the New York Con. Offers to do Cerebus stories were coming in from other people. I was learning more about what I was doing every time I did a page.

Cerebus No. 12 (cont'd)

Beduin was also the first city that I began to visualize extensively in my head. From issue eleven on, the background became less important to the artwork and became a more integral part of the story than ever before. For the most part, my enthusiasm for a realistic location stemmed from my brother-in-law Michael Loubert. I was beginning to rely on him more and more for authentic touches and insights into the workings of pre-industrial civilizations. In time, I would become overbearing in my demands, looking for ideas from him that I should have been developing on my own. At this time, however, it was a substantial boost that the book needed to avoid a cosmetic feel to the cosmology.

If I was going to have to draw in the middle of a football field, I was to determined, at least, to draw the best book ever done in the middle of a football field.

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Denise and Dave:

After by no means sober reflection, I have a few things to say about the killer who looks like a bunny. Cerebus needs to lighten up before he goes over the edge. He is far too gloomy. Of course, if I were short, grey, furry and smelled bad my outlook would be pretty grim, too.

He doesn't know how to laugh.
Is that why he makes me laugh?
He should learn to laugh.

Learning seems to be what Cerebus is about. The poor boy gets smarter, if not much luckier, with each issue. Of course, every time he thinks he understands the game, the rules are changed. Issues 8 and 9 were excellent in this respect. In issue 8, Cerebus is trapped, he knows he is trapped, and he is ready to deal with his entrapment rather than running away from it. Then, in issue 9, you pull the rug out from under Cerebus and wipe out his new security. All of Cerebus' soul-searching and compromising in issue 8 was for nothing. Beautiful.

Now that you have Cerebus lost somewhere deep in the dark night of the soul, he is ready to take a new imprint. Sex and drugs in large amounts would be my prescription. Restore the boy's faith.

As we saw in issue 6, Cerebus under the influence of drugs is a fundamentally better Cerebus. Cerebus under the influence of a pair of well-turned legs is better yet. ("I'll buy you a house!" Perfect.)

Consider the plot possibilities! A killer aardvark drunk is still a reasonably predictable creature. A killer aardvark on drugs is a threat to public safety and the smooth functioning of established power structures.

Your recent issues have made Cerebus a familiar and sympathetic character. Few of us have ever had to slay a hell-spawned demon or destroy centuries old death cults. Many of us, however, have had to survive entrapment and broken dreams. Also I can remember a time when I too lost my heart while stoned out of my gourd. Love freely given is the greatest adventure.

This familiarity is what is lacking in most comic book characters. Cerebus is an excellent piece of work because the killer who looks like a bunny is, this sounds strange, a believable character. He is someone I know.

Cerebus is much more than just a good parody. He is all of us on the road. Thank you.

Loran Gayton
556 S. Grant,
Denver, Colorado 80209

I begin to think that a lot of the attraction Cerebus holds for people is that his life is very much like that of a freelance independent comic book artist. Just when you think the money is in the bank, you're out looking for another job to make ends meet. Stay tuned folks, and maybe things will start looking up for both of us.

* * *

Dear Dave and Deni,

First, about CEREBUS 11, the best of the parody stories you've done. I see it as an imaginary story that someone affiliated with Warner Communications' comic book division has always wanted to do, without earth-pigs in the way. Dave gave a fascinating speculation on what it would probably have been like if the murder of Bruce Wayne's parents had turned him into a schizophrenic thief instead of a defender of law and order. Once again, another Cerebus story with solid craftsmanship and a slightly warped sense of humor. Dave, I'm learning not to expect less.

Secondly, it was a pleasure to meet the two of you at Phil Seuling's July 14 comic book convention. I'm the loudmouth who sat in the third row of your seminar and asked any question that came to mind. I couldn't understand why so few other,people spoke up, and I suppose I'm partly to blame for monopolizing the thing. It's just that I'm so fascinated with the way you turn out comic books that I was compelled to pick your brains. I hope your estimation of Philadelphia is now higher than it was before the convention, since Dave only knew of it as The City That The Maple Leafs Always Get Clobbered In. This Philadelphian thinks you Canadians are two very special and unique people in the comic book field. (And thanks for autographing my copies of issues 10 and 11 and giving me a magic marker sketch of Cerebus. They were very much appreciated.)

At your seminar, Dave claimed you'll both put out Cerebus books for twenty-six years. Now really, nobody can be certain about **anything** like that; let alone doing comic books about aardvarks. I'll be satisfied if you both take it issue by issue with the same quality and care. Best of luck and Tarim be with the two of you.

Gerard Einhaus
4324 North 6th St.,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19140

I think it's time for the comic book medium to involve itself with long-term one-man projects. Just as you wouldn't get Neal Adams to take over Krazy Kat after George Herriman died. I hope to make Cerebus and Dave Sim synonymous and produce 156 issues. The last of which should be dated December 2003. Stick around and see if I can do it, okay?

The idea for the Cockroach was inspired by a former Warner someone: Marshall Rogers.

* * *

Deni, Dave, you have a great thing going here. Any more titles you decide to publish, I'll buy' em. And Cerebus, you don't have to be cranky anymore, okay?

Danny M. Davids
6430 Chippewa Road 3
Colorado Springs, Colorado
80915

Cerebus' plea was effective beyond his wildest dreams. The letters this issue have been culled from a stack about two inches high. As for new titles, sometime in 1980, A-V will be releasing SWORDS OF CEREBUS, reprinting the first three issues in their entirety with a new cover and a new story (not Cerebus) written by Deni and drawn by Marshall (fire escapes) Rogers.

* * *

Nay, what expanse of muskeg great
freezing lakes and prairies straight
must stretch betwixt my land and
yours,
to banish aardvarks from the stores
E'en as the bands of steel,
nor dieselled pistoned powered
wheel
Not even high on metal wing
Shall not these transports
bring
The legend of the thicktailed pig?
Perhaps the land of prairie dogs
be far too cold for furry hogs.
The creature bred of nature tough
finds for his soles our grass too rough.
Perhaps the sight of rocks which
scrapes
the soaring clouds with ice that
drapes
the cliffs where never trees shall
grow,
fills Cerebus with vertigo.
Some of us would money spend
to read of aardvarks once again.
But spend I can't to hear his feats,
If they never reach our streets.

Now that I've disgraced English literary tradition with the above, I

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

desired some knowledge concerning the ordering of certain issues, being as rare as native palm trees here, namely 6 and 3. Hence the stamp. Aye, please answer not on the back of your next issue solely, as that profits me nought, if I never view it.

And thusly, keep up the good labour, that I assume you still engage in, and keep the dirt hog out of mischief. Also, be it my imagination, or grows his ears since the earlier issues at the expense of his muzzle?

DFW
306 604 1 Ave.,
NW Calgary, Alberta

If Earth-pig issues you are lacking,
get yourself financial backing
Find a pen and pray, don't tarry
send your cheques made out to Harry.
(Kremer, that is, c/o Now and Then Books, 103 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ont.)

* * *

Boo dere Denise & Dave -

I've been meaning to write y'all for so long that I'm not sure I haven't already ... uh ... if you have gotten this here praise from earlier this year, just put it down to a hectic life.

I love **Cerebus** madly. He greatly resembles a cantankerous brown dog (named "Brown Dog") I had from age 11-26. He firmly believed he was a brother in the family. His favourite TV program was "Twilight Zone" and two of my human brothers owe their continued existence to his fast thinking. He was much smarter than all my brothers put together ... Fantastic beastie.

Cerebus is better with his sword and can hold his liquor much better than Brown. I think Cerebus is taller and of course, has a highly superior tail.

Your writing and most of the artwork is the most amusing sharp and downright terrific outside of 1950's MAD magazines. Just super yummy and especially gratifying to those of us who've come up against the traditional comics characters mindset. And often lost. Your series is a triumph for sheer brouhaha. Utter poobah.

Too bad Pudge doesn't have Cerebus as a guru, she would surely be saved a lotta trouble. Or ... would at least get into **different** trouble.

I much admire your efforts on the edge of comics - keep up the good play.

Lee Marrs,
1942 Channing Way 303
Berkeley, California 94704

1950's MAD magazines? Spa Fon and Tarim! Cerebus seems to be travelling in faster company all the time. Lee Marrs is the creator of PUDGE, GIRL BLIMP cancelled by STAR *REACH after a handful of issues. If you listen closely, you can still hear Mike Friedrich gnashing his teeth.

* * *

Dear Dave, Deni and Cerebus

After listening to descriptions of and praises for Cerebus by my local comic dealer, I decided to take a chance, and picked up Cerebus 5. Now, four issues later, I think I've contracted terminal aardvarkitis - but what a way to go! Thank you, Ellen!!

How does Cerebus manage to keep such a straight face with all this humor flying around him? Aw, it doesn't make any difference, I guess ... as long as it continues. His encounter with the Panrovian was great, although the rotten jokes were a low blow (excusable, since Cerebus looks to be about four feet tall). But turnabout is fair play - K-cor toyed with Cerebus just the way our beloved aardvark did with the Panrovian, sans jokes.

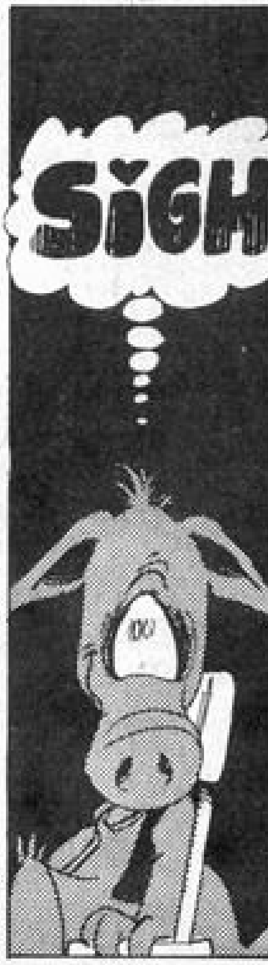
* * *

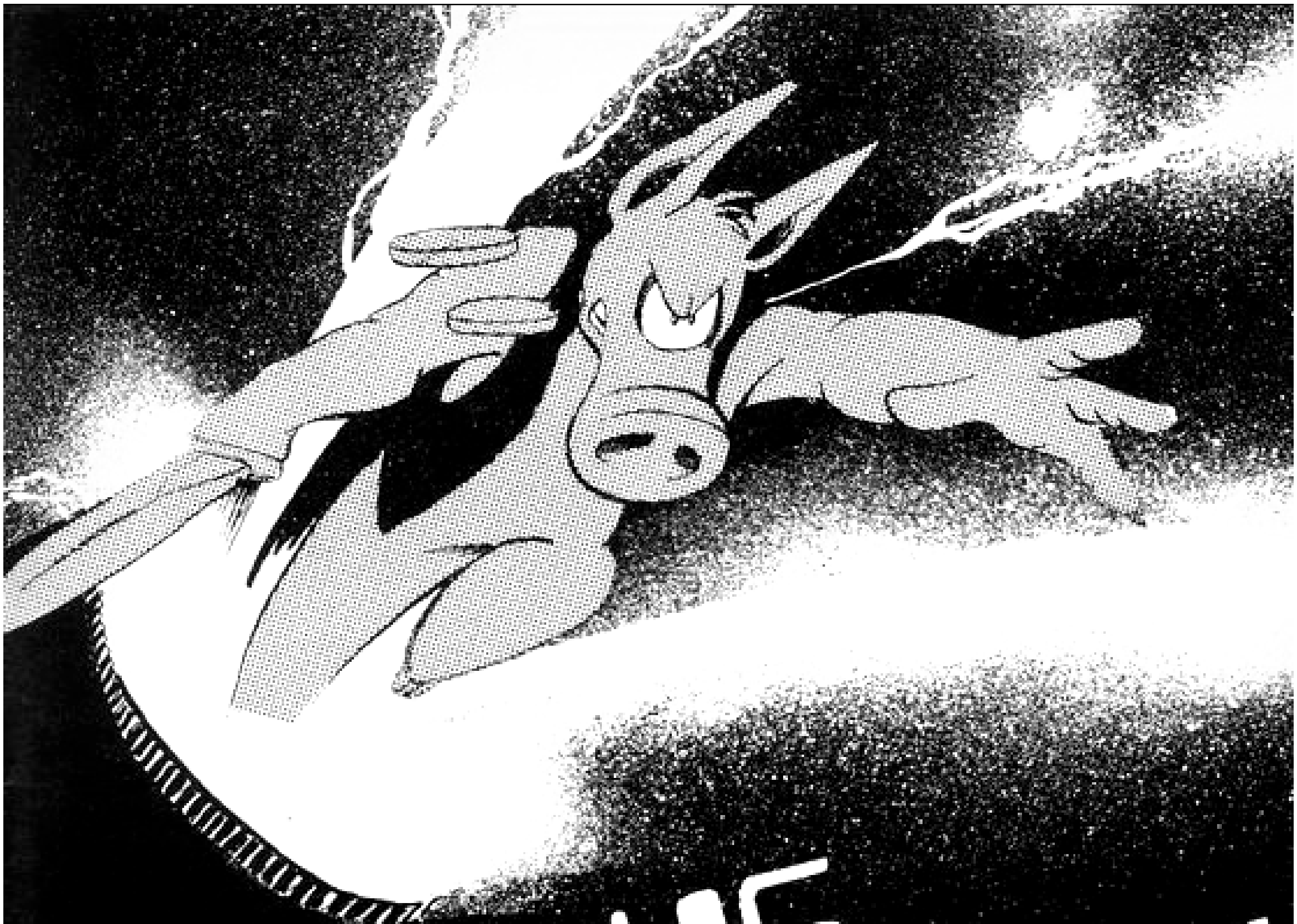
NOTES

After the last issue was sent to press, I had a nervous breakdown and played bull goose loony in the psychiatric ward of the local hospital for four days. As a consequence, I missed out on the New York Con and the presentation of the Ed Aprill Award for 1978-79 to (surprise of surprises) Cerebus the Aardvark.

I did attend the Philadelphia and Atlanta conventions, though, as scheduled and had a marvelous time at both, meeting Wendy and Richard Pini, John Byrne, Kenneth Smith and renewing old friendships with Howard Chaykin, Gil Kane and Marshall (ladies man) Rogers. I was pleased with reactions to Cerebus all around - particularly from Barry Smith and Berni Wrightson (who I didn't get to see) and Sol Harrison (who I did). If all goes well with accounts payable on this issue, next issue should see the introduction of the Cerebus newsletter as an eight page supplement in the back of each issue, featuring Cerebus products like figurines, stuffed toys, buttons, hand puppets, holograms and more (please don't drool on the letters page) as well as drawings by Wendy Pini, Howard Chaykin and John Byrne of the Earth-pig born, an Aardvarkian Age column by Michael (war-gaming is my life) Loubert and some insights into the diseased mind and tight-wired nervous system of yours truly. And if you still need something to spend your money on, you can write to Gene Day, Box 207, Gananoque, Ontario, for details on the first issue of BLACK ZEPPELIN which will feature a four page Cerebus story that takes place between issues 11 and 12 - it's a parody of Elfquest (snicker snicker tee hee). You can send him a dollar and some change for postage if you're worried about missing it.

Take care and we'll see you next issue.





CEREBUS THE HOLOGRAM

Thanks to Laser Photography, miniature sculpting and Phil Seuling now you, too, can have an official CEREBUS the AARDVARK hologram pendant! Under any ordinary white light, the Earth-pig comes to dazzling life! Quantities are limited, so order today! The pendant comes with neck chain and display case

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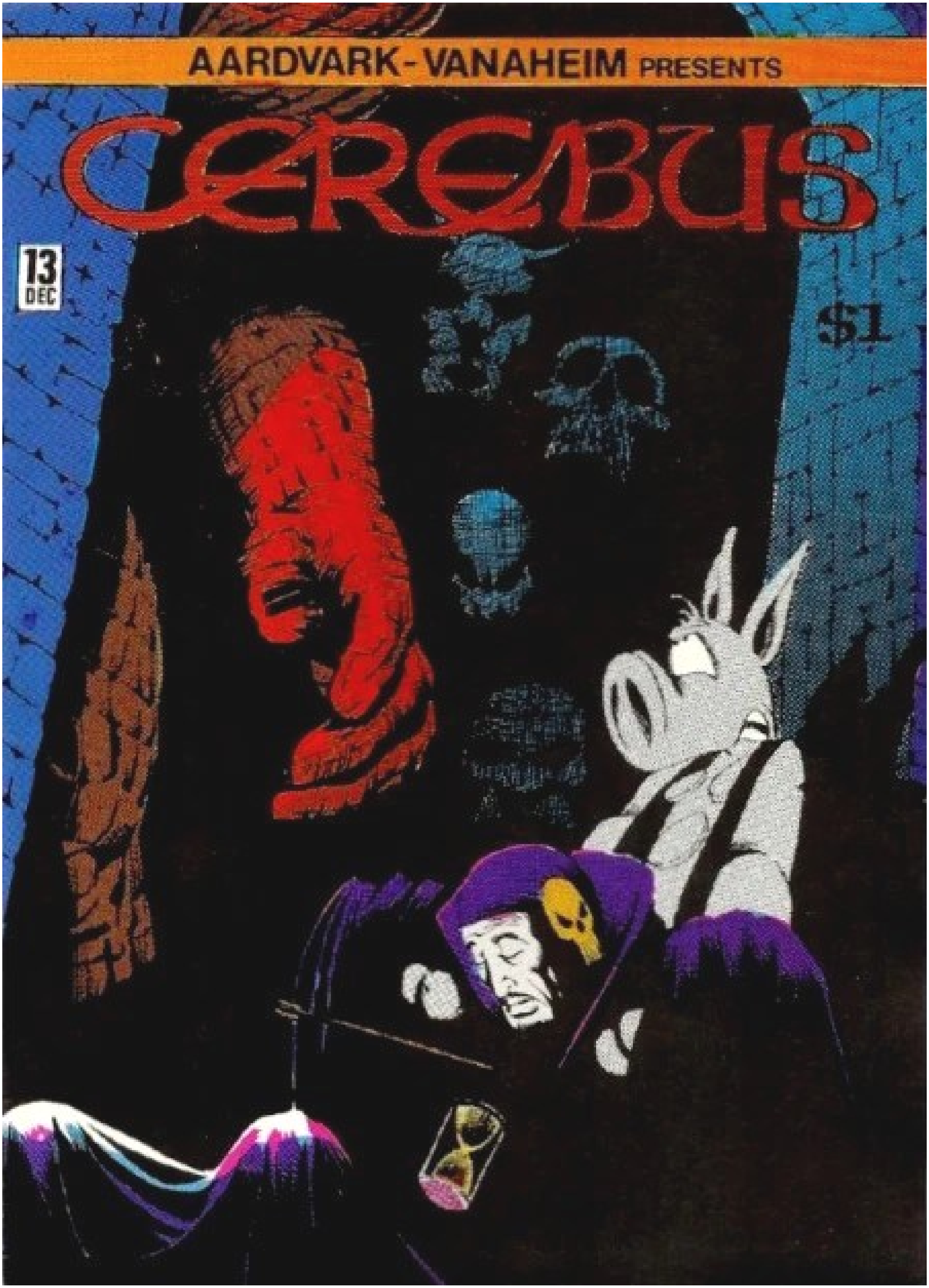
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
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CEREBUS

A Word From the Publisher

This is a special issue in many ways for Dave and I. First, it is the issue to mark the successful completion of two years with Cerebus. They have been busy, difficult, often hilarious years, but we never doubted that they were worth it. The biggest reason is you, everyone who has read Cerebus and who ever will; because without you it could never have happened, or had any reason to happen.

Furthermore, after this issue I will no longer be publisher for Cerebus, although I will continue to give my viewpoint of Cerebus through this page. The reason for this is I am currently applying to go back to school to take some training. As I will need to put in some hours working part-time to support this - very little time will be left for A-V Press. For this reason Dave is taking over all duties of A-V until ... who knows when? I suppose until I know for sure what I want to be doing. I would appreciate all the support that you can give him — as this will mean even more of a workload than he now handles.

Anyways, enough of this. This issue, I promise, is gonna leave you laughing. Dave's writing is certainly turning new corners in this story. I dare not say too much more about the story, for fear I will give it all away! The backgrounds for these areas Cerebus is traveling will be outlined in Michael's "Aardvarkian Age" in the newsletter. I've got a column in there too (the newsletter), so I'll just let you sit back and enjoy "Black Magiking" and I'll see you back there afterwords!

Deni

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark-Vanaheim Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Published bi-monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents © 1979 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 No. 13, Dec. 1979 - Jan. 1980.

INTRODUCTIONS

"Magiking" (previously unpublished)

"Black Magiking" (Cerebus No. 13, Dec. 1979 - Jan. 1980)

I was contacted by a Hamilton cartoonist (Ian Carr) to do a ten to twelve page Cerebus story for The 1981 Comics Annual (a project which was aborted, hence the first appearance of the story here.) At the time I was still doing Cerebus on a bi-monthly schedule, drawing the book one month and filling the rest of my time with mondo bizarro commercial shit ("shit" is a technical word used in the commercial art field to cover those "fun" art jobs like, say, a tire ad or a flyer advertising a disco opening). Any chance to fill my time with more comic book (and especially Cerebus-related) jobs was welcome indeed. It also rather neatly solved a problem I had been having with a major point I was trying to develop in the book - the stasis created in Estarcion by most of it's major forces existing in opposition to one another. Be it politics, magic, wealth, religion, each force tends to have a major opposing force. I had planned "Black Magiking" to show that the Lower Feldan countryside had its fair share of magical forces and beings and situations, almost completely unheard of in the major metropolitan capitals. I was torn on the question of alluding to the good magician. Should I drag him in for a couple of panels, or split the story in two? Or just make a few pertinent footnotes?

Now I had ten to twelve pages to develop a completely different story. The fact that I was asked to gear the story to the "eleven to thirteen year olds" even allowed for a more vivid contrast in the two magician characters. The lightweight "Magiking" reads like a child's fable with a kind of cotton candy look. "Black Magiking" is far grimmer as Cerebus stories go, opening in a typical Lower Feldan riverside village where the resident priest is a kind of combination mayor/judge/counsellor/chieftain/dictator. The inhabitants are basically those same lovable villagers who were never too busy to wander up the hill in the dead of night to visit Dr. Frankenstein. Self-centered, xeno-phobic, paranoid, quarrelsome, and myopic. If you tell them to, they'll be happy to throw some tea into the harbour just to break up the monotony of their day to day lives. ("Crop's in. Expect winter'll be along in a few weeks.")

As for Necross the (ha ha ha) Mad. He was cut from whole cloth; Exidor from *Mork and Mindy* (did anybody at *all* watch the second and third seasons?) He was a very bouncy character, which I hadn't realized until I had a few pages done. Much like the Moon Roach would later, he led me to develop almost a completely different style in order to capture the kind of broad gestures and body movements of a real nutbar.

The ending on this thirty-one page story is pretty flat. I was not yet really capable of really pacing out twenty pages. As I drew the confrontation with the priest and villagers of Theyr facing Necross and then Thrunk, I kept coming up with lines I desperately wanted in the book. I identified so much with the villagers, engaged with this great struggle with the forces of evil, but still quibbling over who gets the crops when they get back to the village. The ending finally got squeezed into two panels.

By the way - the castle that looks like a huge Black Tower? Remember the Black Tower Empire that I kept mentioning? Well, it has nothing to do with that.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Dave & Deni,

I just finished reading the two back issues of **Cerebus** that my collection of them needed to be complete. Having all of the mighty little mutha's books inspired me to pick up my pen and write (along with the cranky one's insistence from the last page of issue 9). Cerebus is a **total** joy to read and I had to write to tell you both so. It's not often that anyone comes so close to putting out a 'perfect' comic. The effort should not go unnoticed.

Not that I'm just discovering Cerebus or your work, Dave. The prolific, quality work of you and fellow Canadian Gene Day have been inspiration for me many years in my own struggle to be an artist. Every time I've received a good fanzine in the last five years, I expected to be put to shame by some spiffy piece either you or Gene had done. You rarely let me down, so I'd head back to the dust-covered drawing board to try and catch up with you. For that I thank you.

It's interesting to be a fan artist drawing a lot of other people's characters and stories but a heck of a lot more rewarding to have a character (or characters) of your own that people can identify you with.

I remember talking about artists with a fan once and mentioned some piece of Dave's in **Dark Fantasy**. They had no idea who I was talking about until I referred to Cerebus ("Oh, **that** Dave Sim!")

It's hard to believe you're up to your **tenth** book already (you probably feel like you've turned out a hundred). Most small alternate publishers are lucky to see their second one. As I said earlier, putting out an almost perfect (nuthin's perfect) comic is not something that happens everyday. How you do it bimonthly is a source of pride and mystery for all your fans. As for the comic itself.

The package is small, but no space is wasted. Good un-hypey covers, a warm welcome from the publisher (keep it up, Deni) and then consistently good black and white linework with what I feel, is some of the best damn dialogue I've ever had the pleasure to read. **This**, I think, is the strongest aspect of a strong book, barely beating out your exciting, clean layouts. On a good issue, I'll find myself laughing out loud at some line on each page. **Few** books are that consistently entertaining. Cerebus is.

Richard Bruning.

Richard Bruning is the creator of the MARVELOUS FRUITS & VEGGIES portfolio, featuring Capt. Avocado, the Inedible Yulk, Peardevil the fruit without fear (my personal favourite) and the Amazing String-bean Man. The handcoloured version is especially nice for the charge of $2.50.

Dear Deni & Dave,

There's a question about Cerebus that's been bothering me: Is he some sort of Aardvarkian Age God? C'mon now, I'm serious. I think he is. So far (the latest issue here in Chicago is number eleven) he has been the god for two different religions. Could it be that these two religions, so long ago, chose the same, odd-looking creature to worship by mere coincidence? And that many years later, an individual with a striking resemblance to this creature would walk the Red Marches and the Hsifan Khanate? And that he would find these peoples, as was said he would do in at least one of their scriptures? Merely coincidence? That's kind of hard to swallow.

It's obvious that Cerebus doesn't know of his own godhood. In fact he outwardly denies it in the fifth issue. Could he have been wrong? It's possible; he's been wrong before.

Of course, if Cerebus isn't twenty-six, my entire argument falls flat on its face and I look Panrovian.

By the way could you squeeze my name into the newsletter list? I don't care how much it costs.

Larry Will,
231 S. Cuyler Ave.,
Oak Park, Illinois
60302

Anyone care to add their speculation on this subject? We'll print the best letters dealing with Cerebus' purported godhood.

Dear Dave & Deni:

October 7, 1979. Evening. It was almost time for my partner and I to go off-duty.

"5-11, 5-11 See the man. M-3. At Berkeley Manor"

M-3 was suspected murder.

My name is Weekend. My partner's name, Felladay. We're cops.

Dum da dum dum.

We investigated the scene. There was a body all right. It was quickly apparent to me that it had been suicide. Method: Humor overdose. The most horrible and cruel way to die. Laughing to death.

"Why, Weekend?" asked Felladay. "What makes you think it was suicide?"

"Simple," I replied. "Notice the pile of **Howard the Duck's** over in that chair there. Obviously he was a humor addict."

"Yeah. I agree on that. But I've read them myself. They're good, but not that funny!" Felladay adamantly claimed.

"True. However, notice what he's holding in his hand and the title of the comics scattered around him. A full eleven issues of **Cerebus the Aardvark**. Obviously he was trying for a new high. He didn't know how powerful Cerebus is!"

"You don't mean —"

"Yes, Felladay. He overdosed. Died of too much humor in one dose."

Dum da dum dum Dum!

There are a million stories in the Big City. This is just one of them. *

I met you at the recent Atlanta Convention. I L-O-V-E Cerebus, the Character, the Comic, the Art and the humor. I'll try to have a Cerebus costume for you to see wandering around at the next one. Only problem is finding short, gray fur at the local stores. Until your Apricot Brandy properly ages.

Affectionately Yours,
Al M. Rainwater
alias: Zordius the Assassin
Fang-the Pink Wookalee
Alien Ambassador
Werewolf
and Shy, a green furry something

This story reminds me of Claude Cooper from Cleveland and the Copped Clapper Caper.

Dave and Deni:

After an even twelve issues of Cerebus, I figured it was time to let my feelings on the earth-pig born known.

I love it! Cerebus is always the first mag I read after a trip downtown for a fresh stack of reading material. It's also the third, seventh and last. The humour is still funny after many, many readings, and I gasp at the artwork every issue. "Beduin by Night" is the best issue to date both for art and hilarity. Even my wife laughed at the Cockroach and she don't laugh easy.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W6

Dave, yours is one of the few mags that is consistently high quality. It fights for first with **X-men, Micronauts** and possibly **Warlord**. Most mags are a disappointment every month (**Conan** being the biggest offender), but Cerebus brightens things up every time. Let's take a look-see, shall we?

Issue One: We meet Cerebus. An over-sized book on the "underground" rack. It certainly draws attention. Oh, no. A funny animal book. Page one is very interesting. I buy it. The rest is history. Good art and a good, if somewhat familiar, story.

Issue Two: Again, a familiar story, at least at first, but pleasant surprises are in store. Klog was great. The art was better.

Issue Three: This ish did it. Everything was there: great art, more humor than before (love the granola scene) and a horny wench. I was irretrievably hooked.

Issue Four: What can I say? Elric is one of my favourites and Elrod couldn't have been a better parody. Seersucker, the Foghorn Leghorn speech pattern, and the tall, pointy hat were perfect. The Barry Smith elements really show in this issue.

Issue Five: Bran Mak Mufin. Cromag Macs Milc. Fret Mac Mury. And some insight into our aardvark. There is more to him than meets the eye. Again the art was great.

Issue Six: This one left me on the floor in tears, both of laughter and of sadness for the little critter who'll never know what he's passed up. Three new characters, E'lass, Turg the Unduly-Tall (LOVE IT!), and (SIGH!) Jaka. Let's hope these three return soon. The art hit an all-new high, believe it. And Cerebus had his vest back.

Issue Seven: More insight into the Earth-pig, the return of Elrod, a Cerebus toy, and you and Deni (thought I forgot about you, eh) have tied the knot. Fantastic! All this marred only by a Frank Thorne cover. Ah, well, thus is life.

Issue Eight: This was a strange issue for some reason. Cerebus becomes a ruler, learns a new cheer, then almost gives it up. The art was solid this time, but this issue didn't stand out for some reason I can't fathom.

Issue Nine: This one was good. Art, story, Cerebus, everything. Cerebus taunting Koghem was hilarious. I liked the text revolving around the fight with the energy globes. Good storytelling there. And Cerebus is once again broke, which is the way it should be.

Issue Ten: Dave you should use an air-brush more often. I could believe the snow-storms. Unusual in a comic. It was good to see Sophia again. Page nineteen was excellent without being overdone. I loved the aardvark's final method of obtaining the lotus.

This brings us to Issues Eleven and Twelve: These are my favorites to date. The Cootie was a stroke of genius, a real nut, a regular Wicked Witch. HSSSS. How did you know that was my mostest fav-o rite line in the movie? But more! The real Cerebus is again revealed. Greedy. Obsessed with it and willing to stop at nothing to get at that gold. Not that I can blame him. Only one problem. Until number 12 came out, I thought a page was missing from number 11. The story didn't seem to end. Now I know why, but it was frustrating at the time.

Tell me, were you experimenting with number 12? There were shadows there that hadn't been used before. Whatever it was, I liked it very very much. I think the Cockroach and Elrod should both make regular appearances. They are the best supporting characters you've come up with.

I didn't realize this letter was becoming so long. Did it say anything? What it boils down to is this. I love the mag. You've created a real winner, Dave, so don't let it get away from you.

Punchem Innaface,
John Marvin,
1230 Radom St. 14
Pickering, Ontario
L1W 3B8

Regarding your questions on technical aspects of the art — would that I could **afford** *an air-brush. The snow effects in number 10 were accomplished with the aid of a toothbrush soaked in white paint. Flick flick sprtz sprtz. If there's anything a Canadian artist should know how to render, it's snow. Issue 12 was drawn on GRAFIX art paper. It is preprinted with two gray tones (light and dark) which are developed by different clear liquids. Punchem Innaface to you, too.*

Dear Cerebusians:

I finally had to write. Having picked up number 5 on a lark, then re-discovering the old aardvark again at 12, I'm mad at myself for missing six issues. My initial impression was "Hm. Another small-time comix operation with a parody." But with each successive rereading, I began to realize the insight, work and just plain ol' T.L.C. that had gone into it. Now, I find that my dealer is going to be receiving Cerebus regularly, and I, being a collector at heart, want to catch up.

The art in 12 was really incredible. (The best adjective I could find) I realize the work that goes into that painstakingly expressive and powerful artwork, and Dave, my fedora's off to ya. I've read and collected comics for years, and though I've been moved, impressed, etc. by other stuff, never, in all my 6,372 or so born days, have I seen such subtle wit and talent in one place! Wow.

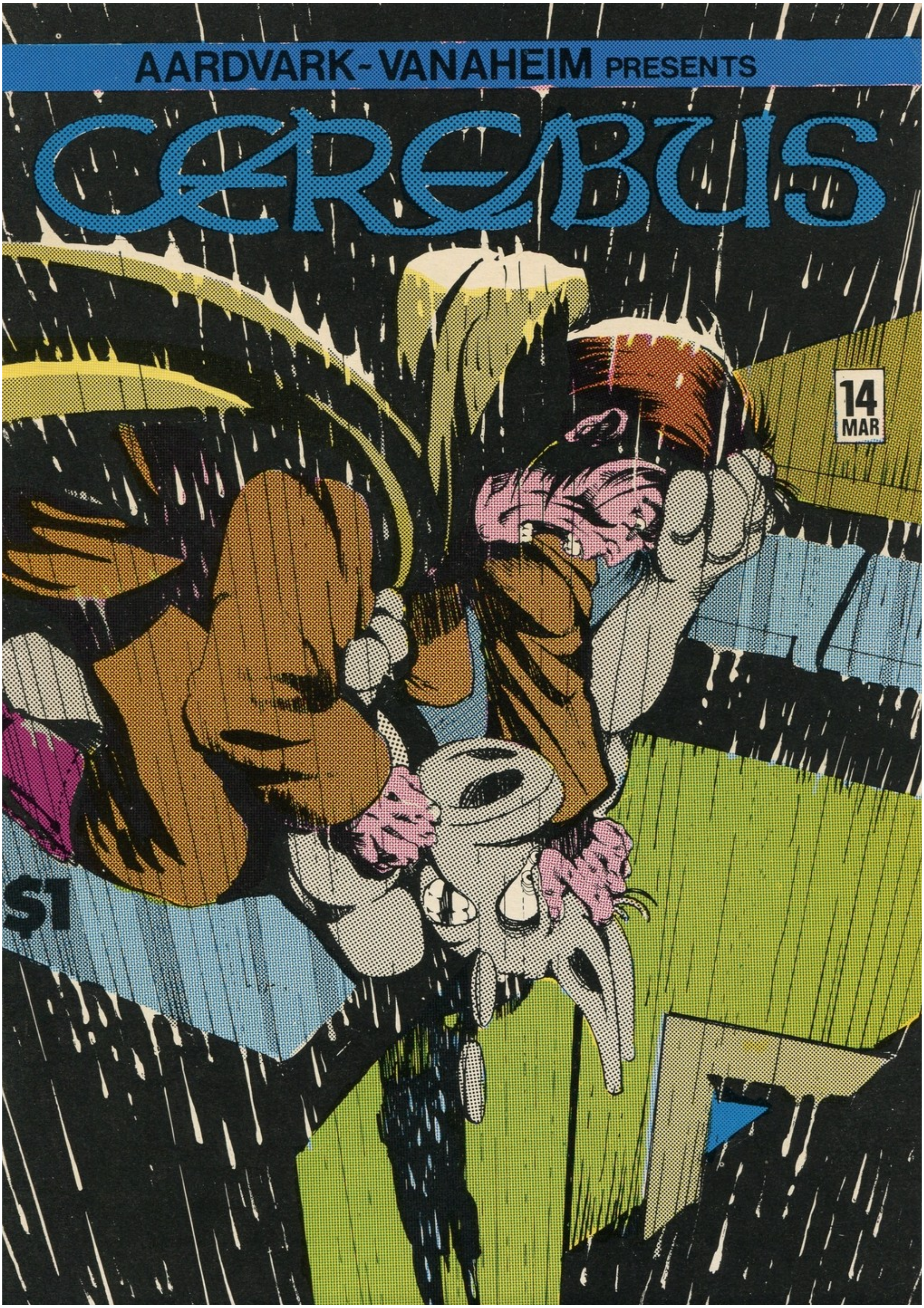
Oh, and one final question ... how do you pronounce "Cerebus"? (That, by the way, sounds somewhat like Cerberus, the threeheaded dog!)

Thanks for putting a little (actually a lot) of fun back into comix. (Robert E.H., eat your heart out!)

Vince Edwards,
1820 W. Lindner 102
Mesa, Arizona 85202

Although I have heard SUH-REE-bus, SIR-a-bus among others, the original pronunciation I go by is included in this issue's story ... SAYR-a-buss.

Of VILLAINOUS VEGETABLES— like clashing GOLD outside the hovel of EGGPLANTE the Barbarian...?!
This BRAWNIO guy is ridiculous — even Seersucker had Cerebus chopping vegetables!


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
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CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

First of all, I wish to apologize to everyone for any confusion caused by my last note. I know that I said the newsletter would be coming, but it seems we cannot afford the time or money. Dave goes into this a bit further on the letters page. We hope that the move from bi-monthly to monthly will help to make up for the loss.

You will notice that in the back of the issue, there are two ads. All the ads in Cerebus are for people who have helped us greatly. We ask that you patronize these people, because without their support Cerebus could not have come into existence.

This is the first issue to come out on the monthly schedule. None the less, I feel it is one of Dave's funniest to date, especially the characters. Of course, I may have a prejudiced viewpoint, but I feel that although different people get a giggle out of different parts, everyone seems to enjoy it. I am quite sure there is something in here especially for you. Why don't you just make yourself at home? Get comfortable and enjoy.....

Deni

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St. S., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. All contents © 1980 Dave Sim. Printed by
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Introductions

"Silverspoon" (reprinted from the Buyer's Guide for Comic Fandom 1980 issues.)

"The Walls of Palnu" (Cerebus #14, March 1980)

"A Day in the Pits" (Cerebus #15, April 1980)

"A Night at the Masque" (Cerebus #16, May 1980)

Hokay.

As I said in the last introduction, I was getting very tired of doing commercial artwork for milk and bread money. Dreaming up snappy slogans like "Femme Fit Jeans - They fit your Femme." Perfect J.B. I think it'll play in Tilsonburg. So I started scouting around for people to sell Cerebus to as a regular feature. Which was when I thought of The Buyer's Guide, a comics ad newspaper with a large circulation. The way I figured it, I could sell a series of one-page strips to be published in TBG each week. I would make a few dollars, the book would have what amounted to a free full page ad in each issue of TBG and best of all it would be time for Dave Sim of Kitchener, Ontario to play "Hal Foster for a Day!"

Seriously now, regional prejudice and national pride aside, not even considering all the pros and cons of Neal Adam's style versus Alex Toth's, the high contrast use of black and white versus thin line realism versus impressionist styling versus stylish impressionism, when it comes down to three-quarters of an inch of steel and a piece of paper and some ink and making a thatched hut with rough-hewn wooden shutters look like a thatched hut with rough-hewn wooden shutters in four lines or less, give me Hal Foster in his prime. Of all the artists I tried to imitate (and if you think Barry Smith noodling drops off the end of the average pen, I have news for you.) Hal Foster is without a doubt, the single most difficult to nail down, for a very obvious reason. The-man-knew-how-to-draw. *Really* draw.

It is a testiment to his sheer ability that so few people have attempted to imitate him and that the artists who have managed an *adequate* version of Hal Foster are outstanding by their rarity. Wally Wood's same *Prince Valiant* strip comes to mind - Jeff Jones *Valiant* parody I saw a few years back at a convention. By contrast Alex Raymond, one of Hal Foster's few peers in drawing ability was imitated by almost everyone in the fledgling comic book industry of the thirties and forties - slashing brush strokes for a background, sharp angular squinty features. Foster's style, as the ensuing eleven pages should demonstrate, is not as accessible. All superflous detail is eliminated. Every Foster drawing is like a well-designed vehicle. No wind resistance.Nothing there but what should be there. I mean, there are artists you can imitate by adding a pen stroke here, some cross-hatching there, some texturing on this bit. With Hal Foster you have four pen lines to get it right and then the buzzer goes and you lose the trip to Hawaii and the year's supply of taco chips. On the writing side, *Prince Valiant* has to be one of the oddest creatures going, past, present and future. On the one hand, it is an epic of awesome proportions - the closest in fact, to what I was attempting with Cerebus. Foster produced two thousand pages of Prince Valiant's life, starting when he's young, having him meet his future wife, lose her, find her again, get married, have kids, have the kids grow up and have adventures. Wanting my Val parody to be as authentic in it's literary form as possible, I read what pages I could get my hands on, hoping to find some "hook" for a parody.

It fairly lept from the page. Prince Valiant reads like an old issue of "Boy's Life" or "The Rover Boys go to College". There is implicit in the writing a sense that the Brits are just naturally superior to the Vikings, the Celts and any of those scruffy sorts who will come up to the gates, right up to the gates, mind you, without so much as a by your leave. Val prevails because he has good breeding, unshakable confidence, and a grander sense of purpose than these low-lifes.

Viewed from my own perverse vantage point ("Hey, you should see what Prince Valiant looks like from over here"), Prince Valiant becomes a pampered aristocrat, prevailing because he has more protein in his diet than any fifty Celts ("Jeeves, another pheasant"). A spoiled brat, unable to see his lofty position as anything but his birthright as a superior person. I just sort of stretched it a bit, really.

Hokay.

The time between Cerebus #13 and #14 was very interesting. I was right royally sick of doing commercial art (did I mention that, yet?) generally, and working for people who wouldn't know a marketable idea or effective drawing if they tripped over it, specifically. it was a rare bit of insight indeed, coming as it did on a clear, but icy cold January night. "Why not do the book monthly?"

I now knew for certain that I could draw twenty-two pages in a month's time - actually more like a month and a few days. I decided to cut the page count to twenty pages just to be on the safe side. I couldn't go to sleep that night . . . I thought I had died and gone to comicbook heaven. To never have to draw another newspaper ad, pair of jeans, cartoon mascot, soccer ball, Buy! Buy! Buy!, 30% OFF or SALE!.

I waxed enthusiastic to Deni about my idea and, of course, she was not crazy about it. She reminded me that less than a year before I had had a nervous breakdown, ostensibly, from overwork. She reminded me that I had just started doing weekly strips for the Buyer's Guide and how would I find the extra time to do *them*? I protested that I would just stop doing the strip. She reminded me that I couldn't stop the strip in mid-story, I argued that the strip was part of the continuity, and would stand as a suitable transition between issues 13 and 14 someday. I'll leave it to you to decide if it does.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

I realized at the time that I started the Prince Valiant parody that the key to Silverspoon would be a father who would come to rescue him no matter what kind of trouble he got into. I had already selected Palnu, a city almost directly south of Iest, unimaginably wealthy by virtue of it's position between the Feldwar States (Upper and Lower Felda and Iest) and the Southern City States (Eshnosopur, Panrovy, etc.). I pictured it's ruler as the inventor of the Estarcion bureaucracy, a concept where you fight unemployment by giving everyone a government job (a

Continued in two weeks.

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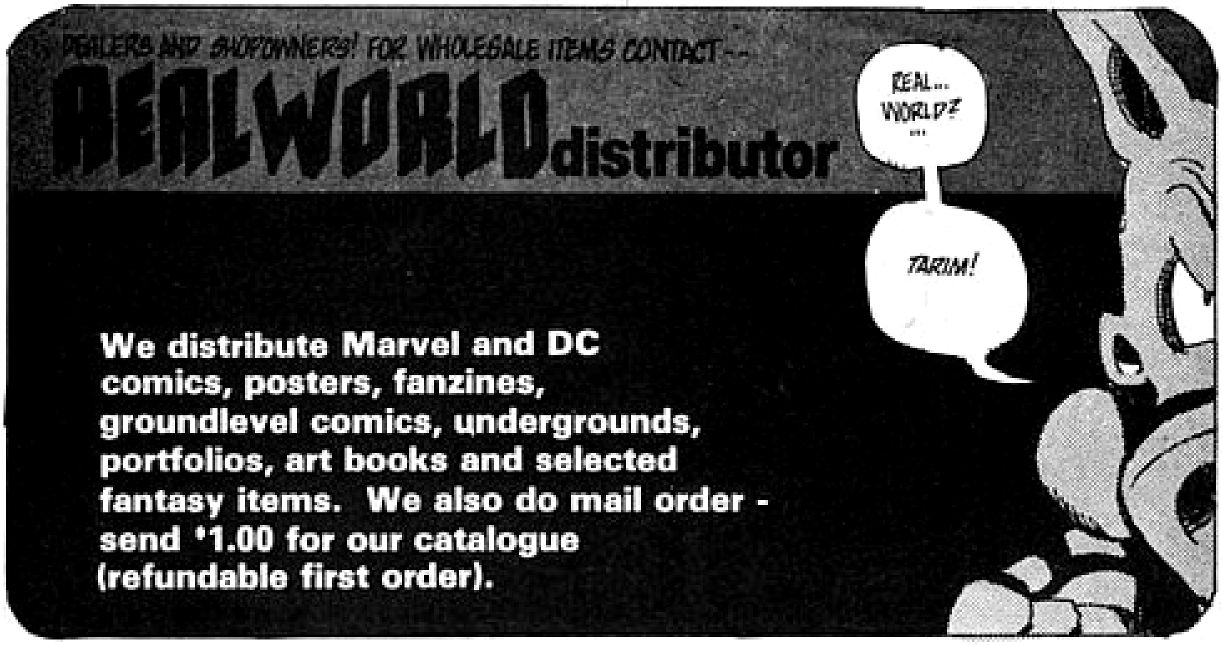

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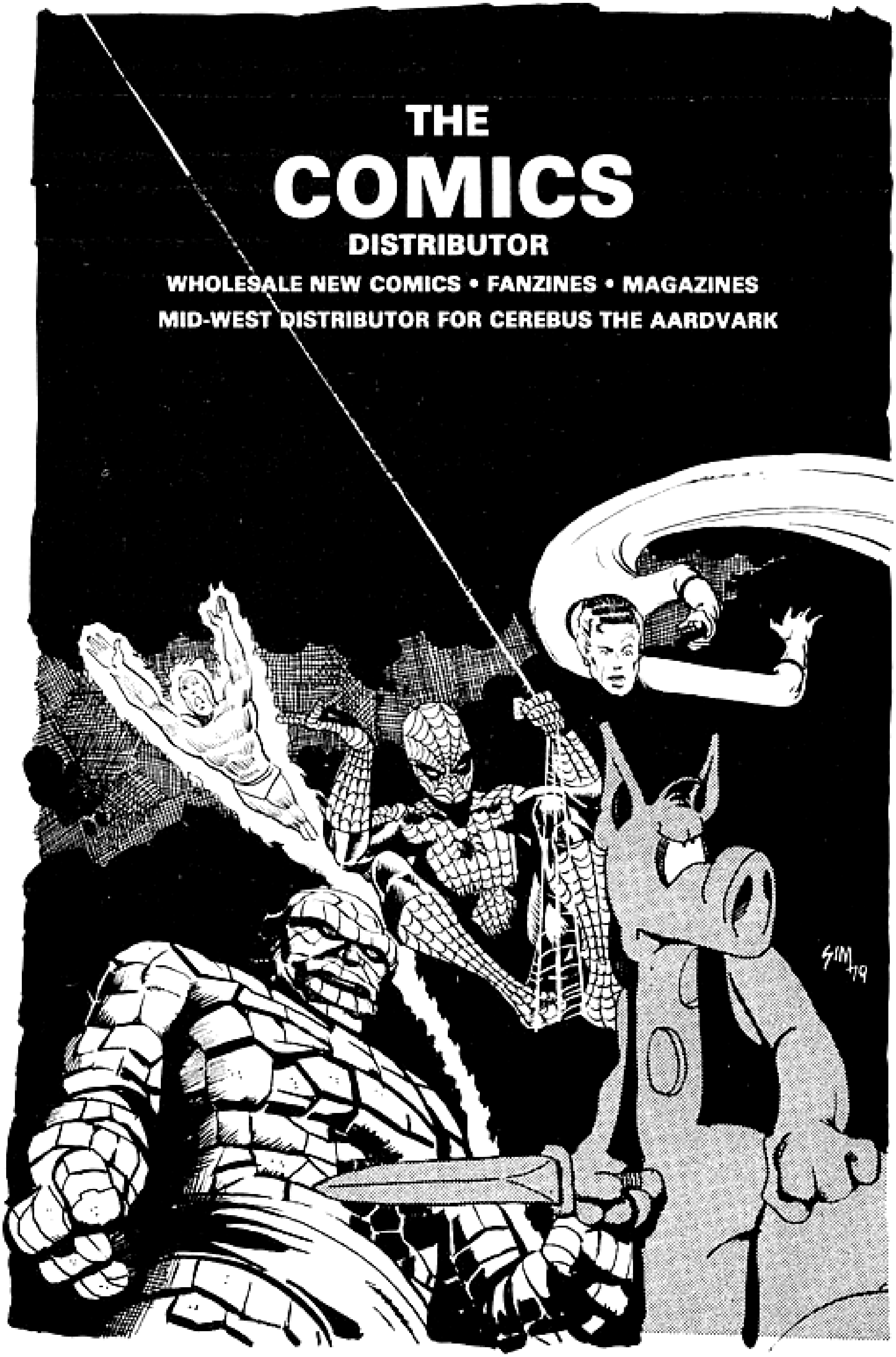

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MID-WEST DISTRIBUTOR FOR CEREBUS THE AARDVARK

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Denise and Dave;

Today I was hooked! A small furry grey creature grabbed my pant leg, shoved **Cerebus** 10-12 under my nose and 'urged' me to read them while prodding my mid-section with an oversized butter knife!

After finishing said trio I immediately ordered 1-9 from a local dealer. I anxiously await their arrival. The jump in the art quality from 10 to 11 is wonderful. From nice to great. I'm also interested in the mechanics of independent comic publishing since I'm heading in that direction myself. I've a few characters in mind I want to try after I get some feedback on them from appearances in other books like **RBCC** and **Heroines Showcase/Adventuress.** I realize you're busy, but any information you could pass on, I'd appreciate.

Paul M. McCall
619 N. Fess Apt. J3
Bloomington, Indiana
47401

As this is a reasonably frequent request for information, I'm going to print the answer here for the benefit of all those who may also be contemplating their own independent book.

(1 Assemble all the material for your first issue. 2) Take an example of what your product should look like to a printer for a price quote (i.e. Cerebus is 24 page demi-tab, 33" web offset newsprint, camera ready, black ink, cover printed on Kelmscott 120M white camera ready, etc. etc.) 3) Adjust the price of your book according to your quote, remember you will have to sell in quantity for forty cents on the dollar. 4) Send xeroxes of the contents of your first issue to Phil Seuling, Box 177 Coney Island Station, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11224 and Bud Plant, Box 1886, Grass Valley, California 94595 along with all pertinent information. They almost certainly won't front you the money for your project, but they can give you an idea of how many they will take when it comes out. 5) Raise the money. 6) Join the club.

***

Dear Dave:

Congratulations on the continued success of "Cerebus the Aardvark." It deserves every good review it gets! The characters are superbly written and the artwork sparkles. Your stories leap from panel to panel and page to page so flawlessly I sometimes think I'm watching a Looney Tunes cartoon (high praise indeed).

The fact that you can produce such consistently fine work while juggling the production drudgery a bi-monthly schedule entails, amazes me. You've got my wholehearted admiration and support.

Best wishes to you and Deni on your marriage. I hope the future is bright for both of you.

George Freeman,
CKR Productions Ltd.,
7003F 5 Street S.E.
Calgary, Alberta T2H 2G2

George Freeman is the artist-extraordinaire of the newly revived Captain Canuck who was last seen headed south towards American newsstands with a very determined look on his face.

***

Dear Dave and Deni:

I haven't been this excited about a comic since I discovered **Elfquest.** The art, stories, dialogue and obvious care that goes into Cerebus are great.

I was leafing through a couple of issues of Cerebus at my local comics shop, was impressed, and bought all the issues they had available. That was issues 6 through 12. I intend to send a cheque to Harry Kremer to get issues 1 through 5.

In issue 6 you mentioned selling pages of your original art. Are you still doing that? I hope, I hope. Issue 6 was the first Cerebus I ever read and a wonderful introduction. I love the whimsy and sentiment with the Apricot Brandy. I don't think Cerebus should necessarily settle down with Jaka, but I would like to see her from time to time. She provided a nice counter point to Cerebus' sardonic side.

Issue 10 was a cover to cover delight. The Cockroach stories in 11 and 12 had me once again savouring the dialogue and appreciating your ever-improving art.

I don't mean to slight issues 7 through 9. They too were enjoyed very much. If I've given you the impression that I can't wait until I get the missing back issues and buy all the new issues — you've got the right impression.

You have one of the nicest balances of art and writing that I have seen in a long time.

Thank you for the enjoyment your work has brought me.

Best,

Ron Tatar
c/o KOKE RADIO,
Box 1208
Austin, Texas
78767

The price of the original pages has risen to twenty-five dollars, primarily because I only have sixty pages from all of the first twelve issues left and I'd like to hang onto ***some*** *of it at least. Below is a list of the remaining pages available!*

***

NOTES

An abbreviated letters column for this first monthly outing. All you guys are going to have to double your letter-writing if we're going to have enough reaction to print in each issue. This time around, it leaves me enough room to get to some pressing business that's developed in the last few months

* * *

The 1980 Fandom Calendar has just been released from Smile in the Dark Productions. Cerebus the Aardvark in a pre-issue 13 drawing I did of Necross the hahahah Mad looms over the month of February and some very nice words written about me. The cover is by Wendy and the whole package is well worth the $2.50 charge. You can order one from FANDOM CALENDAR 1980 315 East Fifth St. 4-A New York, N.Y. 10003. Make your cheques payable to Jay Zilber.

* * *

I'd like to apologize for the times that we have listed Phil Seuling's Seagate people, Bud Plant and Jim Friel as outlets for single copies of Cerebus. While they do fill the orders, I have found out that they primarily deal with quantity orders. For those of you who are unable to get Cerebus from a local outlet, however, there is a distributor who handles single copies and ... tatatadaaa ... subscriptions. We'd like to encourage all of you to continue buying from your local comic shop if you have been doing so. This is mostly a service for those of you who are completely aardvark-less. On the new monthly schedule, you can subscribe for one year at a time — $15.00 which covers postage and secure wrapping. Send those cheques now if you're planning an extended

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

trip to Bosnia-Herzagovina or anywhere else that our distribution is spotty. Address John Anderson, AARDVARK FREE NORTH AMERICA, Now and Then Books, 103 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.

• • •

As promised, here is a list of the original pages still available. No. 1 - splash page (a bit stained) No. 2 splash page (with the logo clipped off) 5,6,10,11,17,18,20,21,22 No. 3 splash (logo clipped) 3,4,7,8,9,12,13,15,16,17,18,19,21,2 No. 5 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11,12,16, No. 7 22 No. 8 15, No. 9 18,21,22 No. 10 4,9,12,13,14,15,17,18,21,22 No. 11 2,17,21,22 No. 12 18,21,22. Send a cheque for twenty-five dollars for any of these pages (please list alternates) to COMICgraphics, 47 King St. W., No. 604, Kitchener, Ontario.

• • •

We're going to be having a two day Comic Art Festival in Kitchener in August of 1980. In the spirit of not trying to make it a Profit Profit Profit Con, we are asking everyone for financial contributions in advance. The size of the donations will decide the size of the festival which will probably be held at a local hotel. Anyway, for those of you who like supporting such things, I am asking that you send $3.00 to Now and Then Books, address above, which will entitle you to a hand-drawn Cerebus membership card for the 1980 COMIC ART FESTIVAL which will fit into any standard plastic convention badge (and haven't we all got dozens of those that have accumulated over the years?). Your name will also go on a mailing list for information as it becomes available.

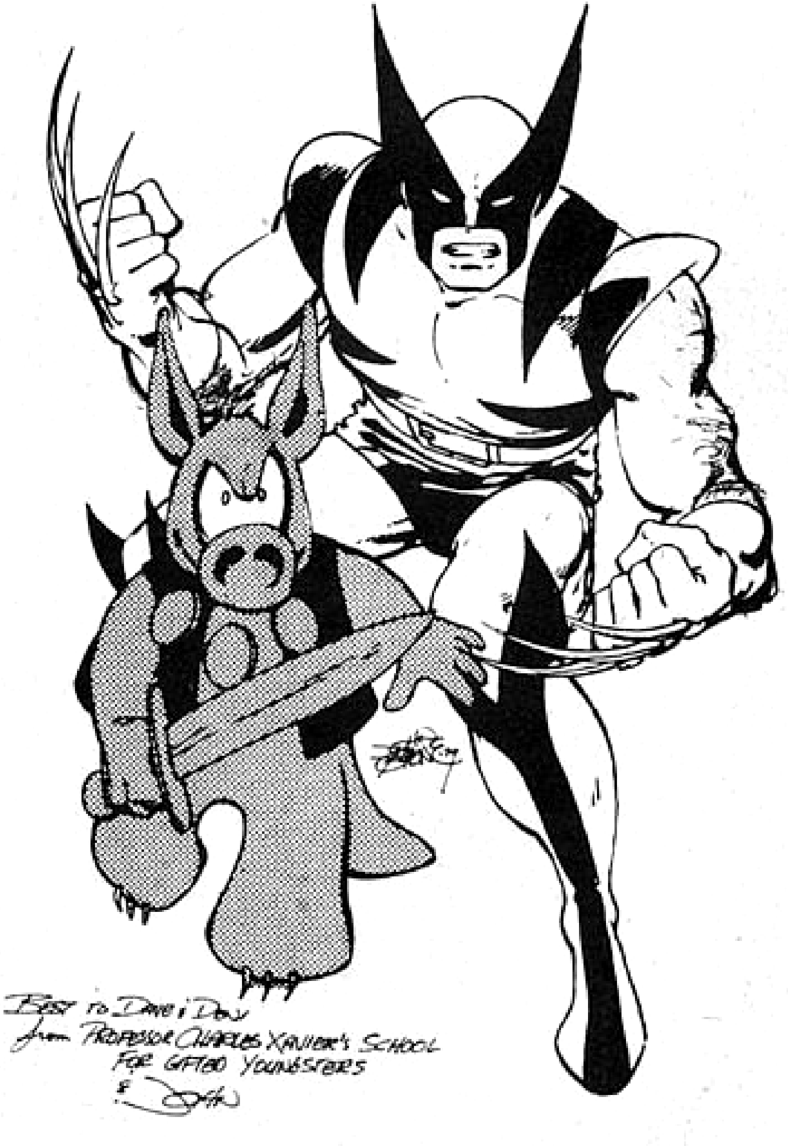
• • •

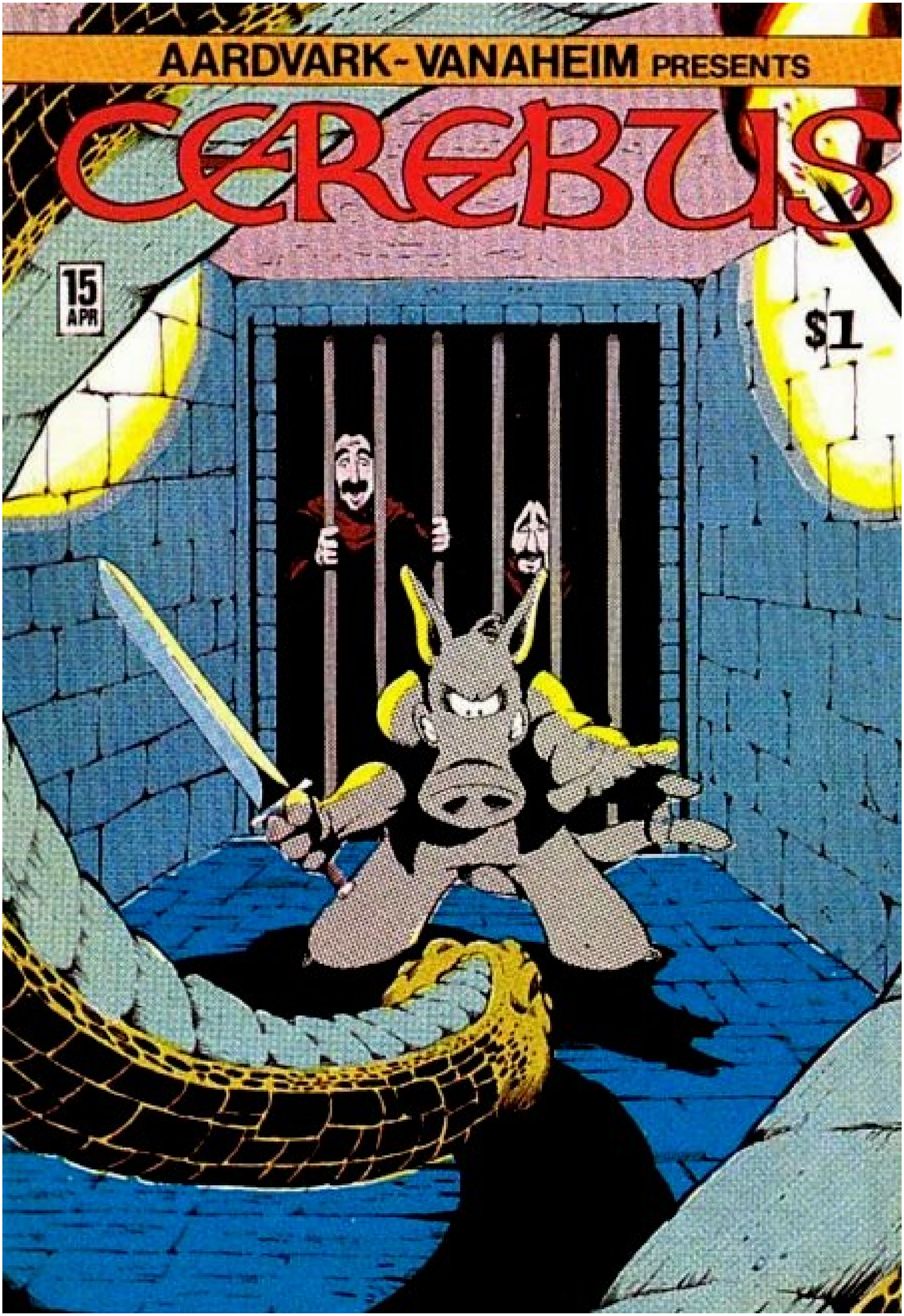
The cost of producing the newsletter, not to mention the amount of time it was taking makes the whole idea of it rather impractical. If there's anyone out there interested in putting their own Cerebus newsletter together, say on a quarterly basis, I'd be happy to supply them with all of the needed information and whatnot. I hope Cerebus' moves to monthly frequency will take some of the sting out of the newsletter falling through.

• • •

Finally, R.W. Main of Toronto, who has asked to remain anonymous sent us this snappy little item, hot off the newswire: "Bronx the aardvark was getting old, so he was sent to Miami to end his days in sunny retirement. But then Bronx found the fountain of youth and became a father again — sixteen times! And zoo officials say he shows no signs of losing interest in mating. Bronx used to be the senior arrdvark at the New York zoo named after him. He was shipped south at the ripe aardvark age of thirteen. Now he is twenty-two, an aardvarkian record for life in captivity, and he continues to cut a dashing figure among the ladies. Bronx has even outlived many of his offspring."

Can it be that some philanthropist keeps slipping ale and apricot brandy into his meals?




AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
15
APR
$1

CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

It seems that things just go so fast with this new monthly schedule.

The story this issue is, once again, great. With Cerebus being monthly, Dave has gotten quite into keeping things moving more smoothly from issue to issue. I think you will see some interesting improvements in the next five months or so.

As for myself, I have shelved my college plans temporarily and am working full-time once again at a printing company after taking a year off to work on Cerebus. I'll admit it's going to take a bit of getting used to — but it's sure never boring. Dave works hard on this book. He can put in ten hours a day and it's a seven-day-a-week job. But it's worth it if the appreciation is there in return. Putting Cerebus out on a monthly basis means there is less to report here, but more to read in the long run. I only hope there are enough Cerebus fans out there to support this crazy idea. We have heard from no-one as yet about conventions, so it appears — for now — that we will not be going to any cons this summer. If it turns out that way, Dave is considering a few projects to work on during his month off (that's when the 80 page **Swords of Cerebus** goes to press). If you know of something you'd like to see Dave try — let us know. We always like to hear what's in your heads. Meanwhile, let's get comfy and check out what insanity Cerebus has gotten himself into this month ...

Deni

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark-Vanaheim Press, 221 Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Published monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. Now and Then Books, 103 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. $15.00 per year, mailed flat. All contents © 1980 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 No. 15, April 1980.

concept near and dear to American Democratic and Republican presidents and Canadian Conservative and Liberal prime ministers). Of course the bureaucracy is in it's infant stages in Cerebus and consequently seems to solve the problem of the finite economy quite nicely, by making government it's own job-creation program. I also envisioned Palnu as a grand experiment in socialism and uniformity. Everyone would wear the same clothes, eat the same food, live in uniform dwellings and procede full speed ahead on whatever task the "Director of Trade" had set for them as a people. Basically this city was an Oligarchy gone strange. Heads of various families vied for the position of Grandlord and the most popular with his peers was the one who held the title . . . until he was no longer popular. I saw the present Director of Trade as a charismatic businessman in the midst of an old-boy aristocracy, consolidating his position with the people by capturing the lion's share of Estarcion's assets and distributing them like dividends to his citizens (I read a while ago that Alaska is doing the same thing with its windfall oil profits. No matter how bizarre I try to make the story, real life usually beats me to it). As the quintessential figure of the emerging merchant class, the Director of Trade would be concerned with running a profitable city. Palnu becomes the first import-export dominated culture to also manufacture consumer goods, mass-producing the tunics, trousers and boots everyone wears and exporting what they don't need to clothe their own people. The problem was that I kept picturing K'cor as the Grandlord. Someone big enough and strong enough to keep everyone in line and function as the absolute center of his city-state. All roads would lead to the Grandlord's office in Palnu's Trade Building.

It was not until Christmas of 1979 when Deni and I attended a ChristmasCon in Philadelphia (really) and we stayed with Howard Leroy Davis of the Delaware Valley Comics Consortium the night before that I figured it out. I had bought the latest Comic Journal at a Philadelphia comic shop that day and it contained the first major review of Cerebus by Kim (give me a "K") Thompson. You have to understand that this first review was critically important to me, because after two years, I had had almost no feedback from the major fan press, which led me to believe that either a) there was something seriously wrong with the book that led everyone but a couple of thousand loyal fans to dismiss it out of hand or b) no one really knew what to say about it besides "weird stuff".

One of the points Kim made was that (except for Red Sophia) most of the parodies I had done became, to him, solid characters in their own right - in effect, greater than the sum of their parts. This was immensely reassuring to me, since I had begun to think by the end of year two that potential reviewers were looking at the book and saying "Right. Elric, but he talks like Foghorn Leghorn. HaHaHa." I had avoided this kind of parody since introducing Elrod for fear that people would see it as an inability to concoct original material. After reading Kim's review (for the eighth time I think) I decided to see if I could apply an outside figure to the role of Grandlord and make him stick. Groucho came to mind almost immediately.

Small detour . . . . I introduced a friend of mine, Lyle Fisher, to Groucho in Grade 11. I'd rack my brain to remember Groucho lines from the Marx Brother's movies and every day, I'd nail Lyle with another one.

"We have to fight for this lady's honour, which is more than she ever did."

"Do you have milk-fed chickens? Well squeeze one and bring me a glass."

Lyle got into more trouble in Physics class for laughing out loud while I was (ahem) just trying to finish writing up the last experiment. Strangely enough, the only other lines that would crack Lyle up would be Foghorn Leghorn lines.

"It's a trunk son! Big suitcase, that is!"

The impact of these characters wasn't lost on me, I guess, and it is natural that they would end up in Cerebus.

The interesting thing about Groucho is that, like John Wayne, he came to *be* the person he *portrayed*. A kind of integration of character and the man took place over the years. I should think that was why he was so pleased when a Los Angeles television station started showing the old "You Bet Your Life" show and that it garnered a wide following in a short time. "You Bet Your Life" was Groucho the Natural Wit, improvising repartee with Joe and Mary Average, proving week after week that it wasn't just great writers that made the Groucho character tick. Groucho was Groucho. I doubt that many people realized before then Groucho's flair for improvising the kind of dialogue he dispensed in the Marx Brothers' movies. It was this quality of verbal manipulation and control that became the essence of Lord Julius (Julius Marx is Groucho's real name). Like Rufus T. Firefly, the head of state for Freedonia in the Marx Brothers' "Duck Soup", one senses Lord Julius stumbling from one calamity to another, his nimble wits and the lack of sense of humour on the part of his underlings, giving him the advantage in most situation. The major strength of the Groucho character is his imperturbability and his refusal to be cornered on any point of contention. "Whatever it is, I'm against it!" Firefly sings to the assembled people of Freedonia. Sung to a bureaucracy, you could keep a thousand lawyers employed full-time trying to find a way around the purity of the nonsense.

"Baskin, my boy, come in. Whatever it is, I'm against it."

"Lord Julius?"

"Unless of course, I'm for it, in which case the tie goes to the runner."

"It's the papers you asked to see on the shipment to Eshnosopur."

Lord Julius' position affords nothing but options. If he says he doesn't remember that shipment, his underlings dutifully relay that message, throwing whoever they relayed it to into confusion and near panic.

"Gak! Doesn't remember? I told you! It's a set-up! A trick!"

One pictures Groucho as welcome replacement for Ronald in the Oval Office.

"Casper, my boy, come in. I want to talk to you about Argentina."

"What about Argentina?"

"Funny. That's just what Margaret Thatcher said."

Suffice it to say that after two years of writing Lord Julius, I am continually amazed at the very basic comedic richness of the character Julius Marx developed for the world at large to enjoy. I try to remain as faithful to it as I can, and I look forward to aging him in the book as the world saw him age . . . the eternal anarchist, caustic, brilliant, insufferable, maddening, and hilarious at the same time. I think every civilization needs their Julius Marx. Palnu is just fortunate enough to have theirs running the whole show.

I remembered while reading the three Palnu issues what an immense task I had set for myself doing what was essentially a sixty-page story. At the time I tended not to see the book in terms of being one very long continuity. I was striving to hold to a reasonably fixed view of Estarcion, chafing

Concludes in two weeks.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Brill! Brill! Brill!

Just knock me out with a feather duster, anything. Just keep the aardvark coming!! Stan Lee and Co. just kick the bucket and bow out quietly. You've been pulverized.

Sorry to be repetitive but I think the mag more than merits it. The illustrations are pretty epic and getting better all along, but the storyline in every issue, (but **especially** in numbers six and eleven) are untouchable!! Your fans in England may be a small clan, but we're totally loyal!

Keep it up, Aardvarkians.

Liz Burak
Science Fiction and
Fantasy Society,
Hatfield Polytechnic
P.O. Box 109,
Hatfield, Herts

Brill! Brill! Brill! to you too. I just love these colourful local greetings.

• • •

Dear Denise and Dave:

Cerebus first came to my notice when I read Kim Thompson's praising article in the COMICS JOURNAL.

The comic sounded interesting, but I forgot about it for several weeks until I noticed a whole stack of Cerebus in my local comic shop and decided, despite the high price over here, to buy a couple of issues.

It was a good thing I did — right from the very start I fell in love with your furry, grey aardvark.

The comic combines a number of things which please me. Firstly, the setting — I am a great fan of both Robert E. Howard and Michael Moorcock, so the sword and sorcery elements are very much my kind of taste.

The action flows very smoothly and were it not for the fact that Cerebus is an aardvark, he could almost be Howard's famous hero himself.

Dave, your art is, in a word, beautiful. But, to elaborate — you combine a smooth, cartoony Cerebus with figures and backgrounds which are much more detailed and realistic. Cerebus' appearance is further enhanced with the use of one, constant tone. This makes him stand out from the page and definitely adds to the artwork.

And one of the most important aspects of the comic — Cerebus is fun! In fact, Cerebus has to contain the best humour I have ever read in a comic.

He is not all laughs, however. Cerebus has a depth of character rarely seen in a comic. The ending of issue nine, I felt, was really very sad.

Anyway, best wishes for the future — I will continue buying Cerebus as long as I am able.

Nigel Dobbyn,
30 Evans Road,
Eynsham, Oxford,
0X8 1QR

I'm getting awfully curious about how much Cerebus **does** *cost in England. It's beginning to sound like our English readers are "a small clan", "loyal" and impoverished to boot. Seriously, the number of letters from across the big pond is increasing with each issue. One way or another it looks like Cerebus is getting around.*

• • •

Dear Dave:

Snortle.

Chuckle, chuckle. Mmmmpf.

Hee, hee!

Ho, ho, ho! ... so much ... gasp ... fun, I ... wheeze ... had to run out and play ... pant ... flamenco ... puff ... with my brother's mouse collection ...

Just a minute.

There, that's a bit better.

I like this issue. Really did. Didn't have that touching quality of 6, and you still haven't come up with a line to top the condominiums for Tarim pitch of 11, but nothing as yet has approached the consistency of 13's stream of half-wit humour. Love it.

Hee hee har arrgh whoop wheep!

Ahem.

It's been just about two years now since Terry Hamilton stuffed 3 down my throat. They've been a good two years for my reading thanks to you.

Keep it up.

Chortle slurrp hahahaha hyup!

P.S. If you don't put me on the newsletter list (regardless of cost) I will start mailing my drool to you till you do.

Peter Green
2526 W 14th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.

What Cerebus fans lack in social decorum they more than make up for in grossness. I will be forwarding a bill for one hundred and twelve dollars and seventeen cents to Peter for each issue of his custom-produced Cerebus newsletter (glad you added the line about regardless of cost, Pete). Seriously, as mentioned last issue, there is just no **time** *to produce a newsletter (not to mention money). We'll just have to cram as much information into this letters page as we can. Stay tuned.*

• • •

Dave:

In between writing a letter to you concerning Cerebus' godhood and actually seeing the damn thing in print, I read Michael Moorcock's six part Corum series. The little furry guy and the religions surrounding him do hint at Corum, especially in THE BULL AND THE SPEAR, THE OAK AND THE RAM, and THE SWORD AND THE STALLION. Both were not truly Gods, but not ordinary men. Both had religions built around them, although neither wanted it. Corum became like a god ... and Cerebus?

In a back issue of your book, someone asked for a satire of Corum Jhaelen Irsei (ever try to pronounce the names in Mr. Moorcock's books?) This person probably intended for you to do a character much like Elrod. But it seems Cerebus himself has become this parody. **Please** go with this. If for no other reason than to give us a Shary-a-Conel-type character. He could tell Cerebus of an eternal champion, and that Cerebus and Elrod are one and the same being.

Give Cerebus a silver snout warmer. Bring in the Fhoi Myore and Gaynor the Damned. God, but this thing's got potential. It could be stretched into five, six issues. Or a special giantsized magazine. Big eight and a half by eleven inch pages! A wrap around cover! A frontispiece! (I'm babbling aren't I? And this letter's got too many goddamn parenthesis, right? I thought so. Better sign off now, before it's too late)

Larry Will.,
231 S. Cuyler Ave.,
Oak Park, Ill.,
60302

Larry has cautioned me that printing this letter will only encourage him to write more. I figured it was worth the risk to prove to all the babbling Moorcock fans that they're not alone in this world.

• • •

Dear Dave and Deni:

I've been a dedicated aardvark-booster ever since about the time issue number 6 came out, when fellow-crazy John Anderson 'suggested' (demanded might be a better word) that I read an issue or two. I did, and I've been hooked ever since. More than a year has passed since then, and you've produced another eight instalments of the Earth-pig's adventures, eight issues that show a steady increase in Dave's abilities as both a writer and more importantly, as an artist. You seem to exploit the full potential of the comic book page as a

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W6

story-telling medium more often than most current artists, and it is this, I think, that makes Cerebus as good as it is: the full integration of story and art, and the way the two compliment each other so well. I must admit that issue 13 was a bit of a let down after the excellence of issues 11 and 12 (two of the best comics I have ever read, anywhere), but the current issue, 14 is a fine effort throughout, topped off by one of your best covers yet. It remains to be seen whether or not you can maintain this level of quality on a monthly basis, but I for one am hoping, and betting, that you can.

Jim Pattison,
P.O. Box 97
Wingham, Ontario
N0G 2W0

Thank you for the vote of confidence, Jim. So far the monthly schedule has been a strain — less from the standpoint of creating the twenty new pages each issue than in figuring out the logistics of getting the books to the distributors and the money in before the next issue has to be paid for. We are ironing out the bugs though, and if all goes well (as well as it did this time), the next issue should be available in the third week of April.

• • •

NOTES

Some bad news this time around. Those of you who have grown to love Bronx the aardvark since we mentioned him in the past letters column will be saddened to learn that he has since passed from this mortal coil, discovered by his keeper curled up in his favourite hollow log. Coincidentally, this is how I plan to go myself. Right after I finish inking issue 17. Thanks to Mrs. Elizabeth Davis (my grandma) of Burlington, Ontario for clipping the item out of the Hamilton Spectator.

• • •

It is with a somewhat reddened face that I admit to an oversight. I missed a very important news item last time trying to squeeze all of the newsletter tid-bits into the letters column. Since the middle of December, I have been doing a bi-weekly Cerebus the Aardvark strip in THE BUYER'S GUIDE FOR COMICS FANDOM. Each segment is a single page, patterned on Hal Foster's Prince Valiant. All of you aardvark completists shouldn't go running for the sleeping pills quite yet. Although six instalments have come and gone, you can still subscribe by sending 5.00 for 12 issues or 8.00 for 26 issues to Dynapubs, Illinois, 61244 For those of you with infinite patience and a shortage of shekels, we will be reprinting these strips, probably in a future edition of SWORDS OF CEREBUS or in their own magazine.

• • •

ARTWORK UPDATE: Pages available from issue 13 1-10, 15, 17, 19, 21 and 22. From issue 14 1-4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14-20. Cost per page is twenty five dollars. Send to Dave Sim, Kitchener, Ontario.

• • •

Since I seem to have a little extra room this time around, I would like to thank everyone for supporting Cerebus through these first dozen or so issues. I started Cerebus with the idea that what fans have been looking for for a long time is an alternative comic book that sticks to its publishing schedule. I had long been bothered by publishers who declared a publishing frequency and then failed to maintain it. Although Cerebus would have to be classed as a very small cult book (our circulation - 4200 - has remained virtually unchanged since issue 6) and it is getting more difficult to cover the increased costs on the same old income, Deni and I have always been impressed by the loyalty of the fans that we do have. I was prepared from the beginning for scathing letters from people who, for one reason or another, disliked my way of doing comics. In point of fact, the only thing that has threatened (and continues to threaten) the future of CEREBUS THE AARDVARK are the comic book shops and distributors. It is here that my fear of a mixture of bad and good has definitely emerged full-blown. With each issue of Cerebus, there has been no fewer than two or three crises that brought us very close to extinction. Distributors who didn't pay for their shipments, agreements that have been made and then broken at the eleventh hour. We still owe a great deal of money to a number of people who have helped us through these crises. Fortunately, our heads are still more or less above water.

But through it all, the people who have remained loyal and who have converted the most number of Marvel fans into Marvel-and-aardvark fans are you folks. Cerebus is built like a pyramid on a very broad base. Each time one of you talks a local comic book shop into carrying this mag, or shows a copy to a fellow comics fanatic, you set off a ripple that eventually reaches the fourteenth floor of the Conestoga Towers.

Maybe Marvel can turn its corporate back on you. As they never grow tired of explaining, fan sales make up a very small fraction of their profits. They don't think much of your taste in comics, artists, writers or anything else.

But in the world of comic book fandom, it doesn't matter how big a comic shop is, or how large a territory a distributor handles. When it comes down to the bottom line, it is your bucks that keep him in business. The good guys are the ones who realize this and strive to serve each and every fan who comes into his store or sends him an order. The bad guys are the ones who figure they can be selective about who they serve.

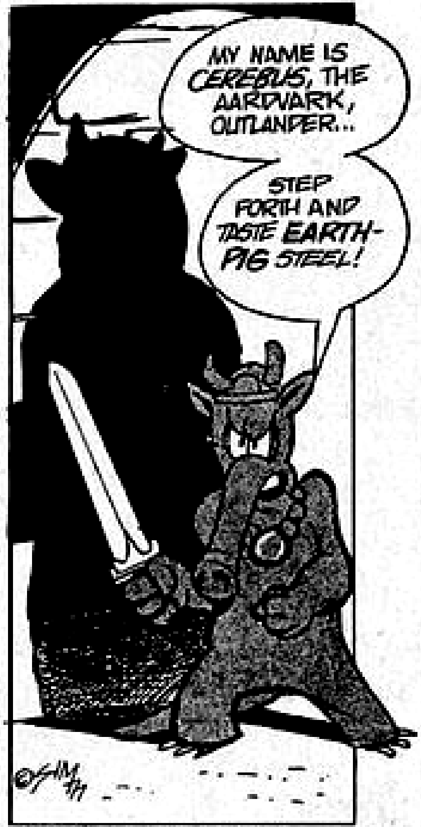
As I said before, Cerebus hovers perpetually between success and bankruptcy.

Each issue that comes out is a tribute to the ability of fans to keep a comic book on the stands.

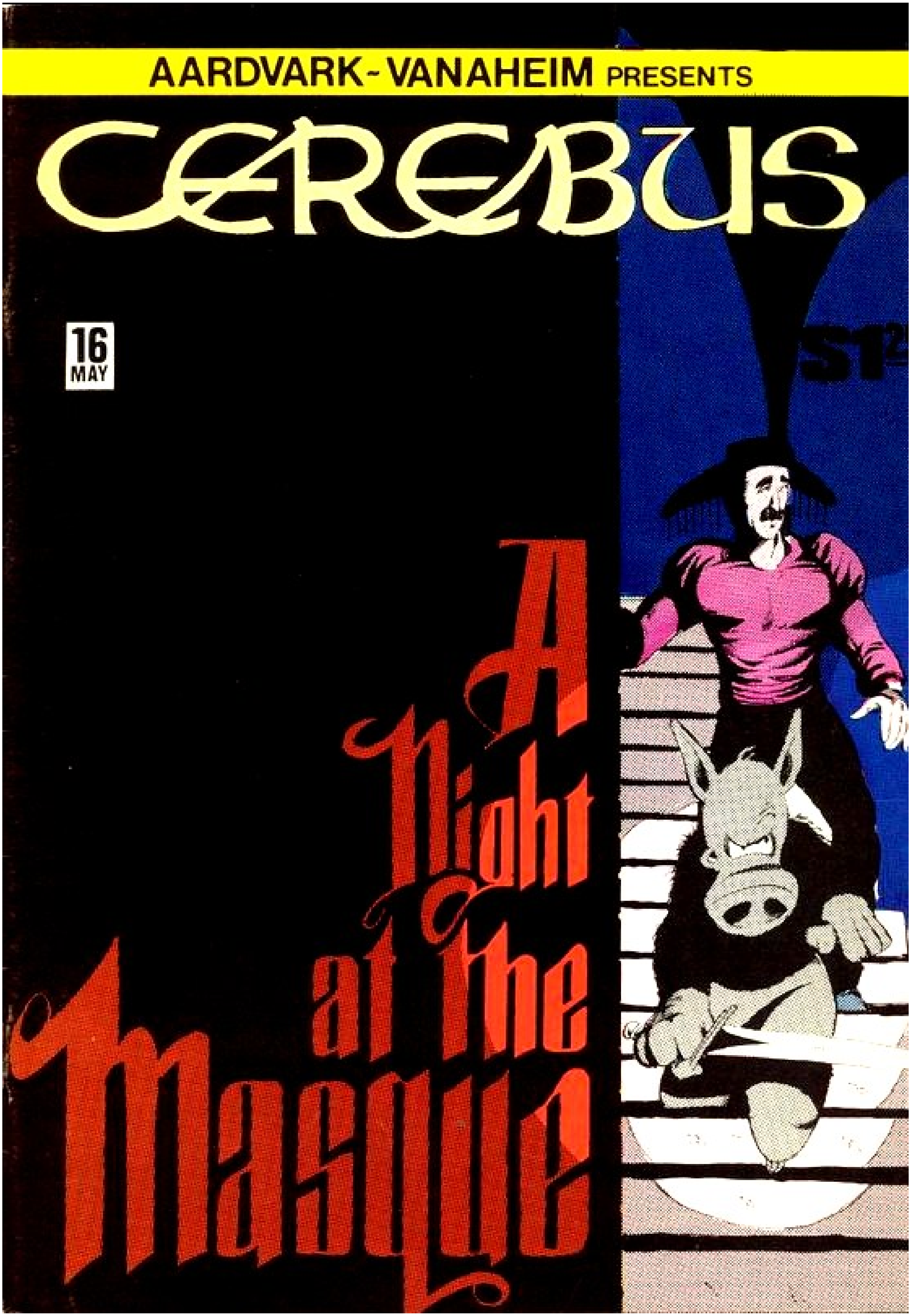
And as long as you keep doing your part.

I'll keep doing mine.

Punchem Innaface.


MY NAME IS CEREBUS, THE AARDVARK, OUTLANDER...
STEP FORTH AND TASTE EARTH-PIG STEEL!
©SIM 77

My first attempt at drawing Cerebus the Aardvark in comics form from early 1977.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A Night at the Masque

CEREBUS

A Note From The Publisher

This issue should mark a new beginning for CEREBUS, the book. As of this issue we have changed to having Sea Gate Distributors as our exclusive distributor, hoping that this will simplify things all around. We just never realized how easy it is to get behind when you're on a monthly schedule! With only one cheque and only one delivery, things should go smoothly from this point.

I'd like to apologize for the lapse of time between issues 15 and 16. Dave was quite sick and we had to get things arranged with Phil Seuling at Sea Gate. In the midst of all this I was laid off at the job I had just started in January, due to the lack of work. I have some ideas, other plans to try out — but for now I'm unemployed. That made things even more nerve-wracking when added to the pressures of getting this issue out.

This issue is, in some ways, a continuation of no. 15. I feel that Dave can write more interesting plots when he's given several issues to work in, instead of the limited framework of one issue. I'd like to know what you think about this, although I have a feeling that I'll find out from some of you whether I want to or not.

We have gotten someone to do the newsletter and hope to be hearing back from him soon. I'll keep you posted on upcoming news as it comes to me. There's not much else to say except, let's just sit back, watch our little furry friend, and enjoy!!

Deni

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark-Vanaheim Press, 221 Queen St. S., No. 1401, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Published monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents © 1980 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press Vol. 1 No. 16, May 1980.

at the constraints that course imposed. Many was the time I would be tempted to go ahead with a bit of funny business that contradicted the major continuity I was forming in my head. I appreciate the effort more in retrospect than I did at the time and I'm often surprised at some slightly twisted turn of phrase that hints at concepts I've begun to develop more fully in the last year or so. This was definitely the point where my awareness of Estarcion as a major fixture . . . almost a central character . . . in the story began to develop even more rapidly. I still have maps that my brother-in-law Michael had drawn up of the geography and cartography of Estarcion. Where possible I try to adhere to them and I have amplified them a great deal in the last few years.

One major worry of mine at the time, and one which I remembered again while re-reading these issues was the wall-to-wall cliches. "The revolution-ary mystic cult" - "the ruins of the city beneath the city" - "the duel on the bridge", and of course, the grandaddy of them all, "the battle with the Giant Snake". Okay, I was doing a parody, but ho-hum, y'know? You can run out of the "twenty-eight Deadly Fantasy Cliches" (or however many there are) after a dozen issues if your character gets around enough. "The Giant Snake" was a must, though, for this reason; I couldn't wait to write this introduction . You know why? So I could tell E•V•E•R•Y•O•N•E that yes, I was thinking of the phallic symbolism the whole time I was drawing the snake. It's true. The whole time I was drawing the snake I was thinking "This isn't a snake I'm drawing, I'm drawing a Giant Dick with eyes", or "I'm not drawing a snake crawling out of his cage with the leader of the 'Eye in the Pyramid' juxtaposed in the foreground. Hell, no! I'm drawing the leader of the 'Eye in the Pyramid' flipping his giant schlong out at Cerebus, who's going to cut it off." Why do you think those torches on the wall are at a forty-five degree angle? That's right! They're really all stiff wee-wees with their tips on fire (ouch). Right down to the big "O" scene where the giant "snake" smashes into the wall and behind it to the Leader of the 'Eye in the Pyramid'. Sort of changes the meaning of the "AAAAH" word balloon doesn't it? Now, why, you might very well ask yourself, why would someone consciously sit down and draw an allegory that revolves around a huge male member. Someday, folks, I hope to open the Underground Comix Price Guide, flip to the appendix with Cerebus and read:

Cerebus	Good	Fine	Mint
#15 (Giant penis issue)	$20	$30	$40

And people say I've lost my ambition.

Ladies and gentlemen . . . my first 71 page Cerebus story . . .

(NOTE - this introduction was written before Hal Foster's recent death. I apologize for the irreverent tone of parts of it; the decision to leave it in that form was mine. I hope no one takes offence.)

the aardvarkian age

by Michael Loubert

(in each issue of Cerebus, Michael Loubert will be examining some of the background on the various places the Earth-pig finds himself. This first instalment concerns itself with Lower Felda and Palnu, Cerebus' stomping grounds for the last six issues)

> "Such dust! A Tarim forsaken place, these lowlands."
> "On the contrary."
> "What, you ken these dry places?"
> "Far from it. But the land is so ridden with religion — far from Tarim-forsaken."
>
> from "Discourses of Theyr"

That was an accurate observation. Nearly from the beginnings of their histories, the twin Feldan lands of Upper and Lower Felda had been plagued with an excess of religious fervour.

Theyr was visiting The Kingdom of Felda about two centuries before Cerebus arrived on the scene. Felda at the time was wracked by religious civil war. The King, a conservative fellow, had tried to outlaw the new Ezthran Heresy from the capital of Bedruin. The Ezthran were, massacred and the survivors fled east.

There they set up a Puritan religious state, ruled by a dour Council of Five. All **their** heretics (i.e. orthodox Tarimites) were mercilessly butchered. That started another war, reprisals were answered by more massacres, and it is truly surprising that Lord Theyr managed to survive it all to write his famous urbane travelogues.

Anyway, after the smoke cleared and the wars died out, the King in Beduin was murdered by a clique of disgruntled army officers. They proceeded to run the place their way, with the usual attendant corruption and graft. Lower Felda, as it became known, became the target of every wealthy cult in the Feldwar States.

All this concerned the urban dwellers of these lands. In Lower Felda, the peasantry (always the bulk of the population in agrarian societies) tried to ignore the weird goings-on in the cities. They tamely joined the armies when recruiting officers visited the hamlets, and when pushed too far during hard times — such as plague or famine — would dig up their swords buried under their huts and rage about the countryside for a few months.

Then the army would drop by (composed of fellow peasants) and would butcher them. Back to square one. No one gave much thought to the humble tillers of the soil. Their history is unwritten.

The basic foodstuff of the Feld River Lands is wheat. Spell it with a capital 'W'. It fed the teeming throngs of lest and Beduin. It also fed the equally enormous armies of Khaidoge and the Mad Onliu. It was responsible for the growth and eventual fall of the Feldwar States.

The Feld River Lands were the bread-basket of the Aardvarkian Age. The peasants toiled, the overlords told them what to plant and when to reap. In return the surplus wheat went to the cities to be consumed or traded overland to other nations less fortunate. It was a great irony that the very nations who spent so much energy keeping the Onliu out were selling them grain to feed the invading armies.

There were problems with the set-up in the Feldwar States. They were never able to expand into the Grass Sea and cultivate it — the Hsifans had a military and political system superior to the fratricidal Feldwin, lestan and Moreshin armies were regularly shot to pieces by the Hsifan mounted archers.

The real trouble lay in the nature of Feldwin agriculture. They practiced no form of irrigation. Rainfall was not abundant but sufficient for wheat cultivation. The Feld River Lands had mostly been savanna before the coming of man. The nomads who wandered over it (and still dwelt in the Grass Sea) did no lasting damage to the steppe. They didn't tear up the thin, fragile topsoil with the wooden plows used by later peasants.

The Feld River did leave a deposit of alluvium annually in the valley itself, but the uplands were bare to the wind. Someday the soil would be exhausted, famine would wipe out much of the Feld Folk, and the Hsifans would sweep in to finish off the survivors.

In the meantime, however, things didn't look so grim. Lower Felda was known for other things than exotic cult havens. Aside from the "Breadbasket" title, Lower Felda was the home of many rich merchants — and not all were schizophrenics like the Cockroach — who made their fortunes from the East-West trade between the Shen Steppes and the Southern City-States.

· · ·

Perhaps an explanation is due concerning the rather peculiar political set-up in Palnu.

First, understand that the present Sepran Empire is, in fact, a successor state of an older empire. The southern portion had, upon its fall, devolved into the so-called 'Southern City-States'. Palnu became one of the more powerful of these.

The Sofim river lands reorganized into the Sepran Empire, but the Southern City-States remained independent. In Palnu, an unstable monarchy established itself. It was highly decentralized — the King was elected upon the death of every sovereign. The Electors were the more powerful landholders, and since anyone of 'sufficient noble blood' could be elected, foreigners were often chosen. They were easier to manipulate than native Palnin.

Time passed, and the World changed. The Feld states to the East opened new trade routes. The invention of the printing press allowed more specialization in politics, the sciences and economics. The old land based economy slowly gave way to a money-based economy.

This trend was fiercely resisted in Palnu, as elsewhere. Often the strife hid behind religious wars; sometimes the nobility would take advantage of the new money'd class, borrowing cash then driving out their creditors by force of arms. But this state of affairs was not to last long.

Far to the north, on the Grass Sea, the Hsifans had defeated the fanatic Onliu; nomad remnants of a dead civilization. The Onliu fled south, over the Feld River and into the Kingdom of Havaina. This they utterly destroyed, cities and all, and resumed their nomadic life.

A large band of refugees from the devastated kingdom marched to Palnu. Better weaponed and organized they dispersed the feudal rabble Palnu raised and took Palnu City after a short siege. There was little real resistance.

Their leader, Clasa, reorganized the defunct Kingdom. He allied himself with the emergent money'd classes, encouraged trade with Amstanat and the Feld States and stabilized the borders. All private armies were abolished; the Nobles were not allowed to engage in trade, the government or the Army. These replied with revolt, but with their retainers scattered, they were easily crushed and their land divided among the Merchants, who could afford to buy.

Clasa began the custom of selling the Nobles' titles to the Merchants. Then the Bureaucracy went up on the block. With the government so tightly centralized in the City, the outlying provinces became difficult to administrate. More peasants flocked to Palnu City, where the money was. Soon a client system was set up, not unlike that in Rome about First Century. Lord Julius can be taken as fairly typical of the rulers of Palnu.

NOW & THEN BOOKS 103 Queen St., S.,
Kitchener, Ont. Can.
- *original Cerebus artwork from $25*
- *back issues of Cerebus 2-5 $3.00 ea. 6-10 $1.50 ea.*
- *subscriptions: 12 issues for $19.00 wrapped securely and mailed flat*

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Creators,

I do hope that Cerebus' next birthday is a happier one. Methinks that he is a tad overdue; if for no other reason than to see that 'sinister' grin of his again! I recently picked up issue numbers six to twelve of Cerebus and I must say that you've got a winner! Primarily my main hobby is wargaming, and only recently have I started to collect underground comix and art. My favourite artist is Vaughn Bode, but the 'earth-pig' and his friends(?) are a rare and wondrous gem, indeed! I believe that we readers should thank you for the privilege of sharing this fascinating world of yours. But there is one puzzlement that I hope you can solve. Despite the future promise of releasing an explanation and description of Cerebus' lineage, what other non-human critters poke about your world? If the world can give rise to intelligent aardvarks, surely there may/must be other wonderous beasts as well? Perhaps Cerebus will bump into an evil-tempered dragon or an axe-wielding minotaur? Or (dare I suggest) a female aardvark? Will our hero find someone he can love (if only briefly)? Is there anything more bizarre on this world of yours?

It must also be pointed out that most humans in your comic don't appear to really appreciate Cerebus' different appearance too much, so I assume that there are stranger critters about, or at least some of his own kind (Cerebus' that is)???

Lastly, does anyone still have issues 1-5 of CEREBUS on sale? I will keep watch for **Swords of Cerebus** too! Ohh, moan! Cerebus, you've got me hooked.

Jason R. Saylor
4933 York Rd.,
South Bend, In.
46614

You want bizarre? Ronald Reagan as of this writing just about has the Republican nomination locked up. I'm not even going to try to top that one. As to your request for back issues, you're not alone. There were only two thousand of the first five issues printed and four thousand of 6 on. The only source for back issues is Harry Kremer, NOW & THEN BOOKS, 103 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ontario. He has numbers 2 through 5 available for $3.00 each and 6 through 9 for $1.50 each. They're going fast folks.

• • •

Dear Dave & Deni:

Welcome to my first letter of comment in twenty years of reading comics.

When not enjoying CEREBUS, I work as a production assistant on the ABC television series, SOAP. I marvel at the high quality of stories our writers tell and performances our actors give. Consistency is rare in continuing presentations in any medium. My praise to CEREBUS the Consistent.

And thank you for your enthusiasm. It shows. The comments before and after the stories are important to my enjoyment of each issue. Reading of A-V's ups and downs, personal and professional, increases my loyalty to the book. I like knowing why things are done a certain way. Marvel and DC may dwarf your circulation, but not your concern for your readers.

I've never been one to buy everything on the newsstand. I have a selection of comics rather than a collection. I treasure my O'Neil/Adams GREEN LANTERN, my Wein/Wrightson SWAMP THING, my Englehart/Rogers BATMAN ... I could go on. I'm proud to display CEREBUS right alongside.

Your labors have brought more joy than any series since The Duck died. Comics are fun again. If you should ever make your way west, perhaps I could buy you and your earth-pig an ale.

Robert Spina,
5223 Auckland Avenue No. 5
North Hollywood, California
91601

As one comics selector to another, I thank you for your very kind words, Robert. Waiter, a tankard of ale with three straws and be quick about it!

• • •

Dear Dave and Deni:

"And what makes you think I'm Necross HAHAHA The Mad?" Loved it. I have never read anything as funny as Cerebus 13, that is until I read Cerebus 14. It would seem that with each edition your writing and art improve; every time I think "He'll never top that!" and Tarim! He does.

I've got to hand it to you; Cerebus is the most professional small time operation in comics at the moment. As far as going monthly is concerned, it was inevitable. However don't push yourself too hard because I would hate to see a deterioration in anything as fine as this comic.

Now then, onto no. 14 "The Walls of Palnu". Lord Julius was great. He seemed (to me anyway) to be a conglomerate of Stan Lee and Groucho Marx. Poor old Cerebus does pick them. Fancy being stuck with that! "Kitchen staff supervisor". Great! Dave, if you keep this up you should have most of your readers hospitalized by mid-1980, by which time they will have busted a gut laughing. (a gut? More likely all of them)

Well, I guess that's about it. Barring two things, Cerebus has made it into my top three: that is: 1. My lady 2. Bruce Springsteen 3. Cerebus the Aardvark. If there's anyone in the U.K. who reads the Earth-pig's crazed adventures, drop me a line. I'd love to hear from you.

So keep up the good work, and I'll look forward to every edition from here till eternity.

Terry Whitehead,
19 Yeutree Road,
Beckenham, Kent
BR3 4HT England

Unless your mother is at least no. 4, I'd be very careful about leaving that list of yours lying around. Be sure and let us know if you hear from any aardvarks across the water.

• • •

Dear Dave, Deni and Cerebus,

Cerebus the Aardvark is a very fine series. I got my first exposure to it with issue 14. I'm not exaggerating when I say it's the most enjoyable comic reading experience I've had in years. I've since read 5,7,9 and 10 — all fantastic.

I especially like the story-telling and the stories themselves. Things seem to move along spontaneously and even by random chance, and yet you always tie things up neatly in the end, often projecting new meaning on everything that has gone before. Cerebus is a very re-readable comic.

I hope you'll keep Julius around for awhile; he's one of your most likable characters, and I think his dry wit is an effective foil to Cerebus' grimness.

Sincerely,
Joe Zabel,
185 Maple Drive,
Youngstown, Ohio
44512

You'd probably appreciate how things tie together even more if you could see the fist sized holes in the walls of my studio. Would you believe it took me a week to plot page six of this issue?

• • •

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Dave and Deni,

Cerebus is one of the finest comic book characters I have seen in a long time. The characterization is great and it's the sign of a true comic (as opposed to tragic or dramatic) genius that you could take someone with as many personal flaws and failings as Cerebus and make him likable and sympathetic. Cerebus is one of the great anti-heroes, on par with Wimpy, Snoopy, Major Hoople and my all-time favourite Albert the Alligator.

By the way, I know enough anthropology to have an answer to Larry Will's conjecture about Cerebus being some sort of god. Men have a strange tendency to link any animal that acts more intelligent than man thinks a dumb beast should be to the gods. Cats were linked with deities everywhere from Egypt to India, Bast being the most famous cat-goddess. Monkeys and apes also were considered gods over the same areas, one ape-god, Hanuman, is still revered in India today. The Greeks considered dolphins as messengers of the sea-gods, and also of Dionysus. The dog was probably deified too, though he became so common by historic times that familiarity had bred contempt.

With a condition like that, is it surprising that Cerebus' race has become regarded as the messengers of the gods by some cults? He's smart, clever, far tougher than he looks, and uses tools just like a human. The fact that the Aardvark-gods are worshipped by evil cults could just reflect the selfish aardvark nature.

In closing, I'd like to repeat my admiration for your strip and hand you the unofficial mantle of: "The Logical Successor to Walt Kelly." Thank you for printing the only great comic book now out.

Charles Garofalo
139 Park Lane,
Wayne, New Jersey
07470

If I was Larry Will I wouldn't take this lying down. Anyone else care to join the "Aardvark as god" debate?

NOTES

And I thought we had problems with last issue.

The new cover price reflects the fact that we have had to use drastic means just to remain solvent. One of our major distributors went bankrupt two days after we sent him his copies of 15, we had a cheque for close to $600 bounce from another distributor, we ... well, it's probably better not to talk about it. It looks like things are finally stable for A-V Press — we're just sorry that it took an extra twenty-five cents a book to do it. And we hope you understand.

* * *

I don't know if I mentioned anything about this before, but there will be a ten page Cerebus story entitled "Magiking" (it makes a nice prologue, I think, to 13's "Black Magiking") released from Potlatch Publications of Hamilton sometime in June of this year. It was originally slated for the 1981 COMICS ANNUAL, but this project (which would have featured works by such diverse greats as Gene Day, Jim Craig and others) has been scrapped. Instead, it will come out in the 1981 CHILDREN'S ANNUAL. As soon as I get some information on the price and what-not, I'll pass it along.

* * *

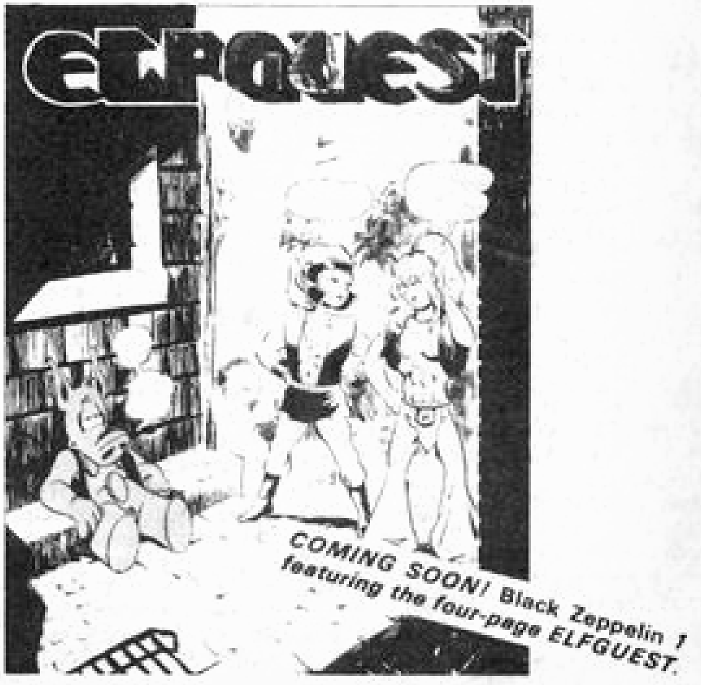
We have heard from a few people who are interested in taking over the NEWSLETTER on a quarterly basis. We are narrowing the candidates down now, and we should have an idea by next issue of who is going to be doing it. It will probably be eight pages long, featuring fan art and articles on the short grey wonder, as well as tid-bits from myself and Deni and even more of Michael Loubert's Aastounding Aardvarkian Aage. Stay tuned for more on this.

* * *

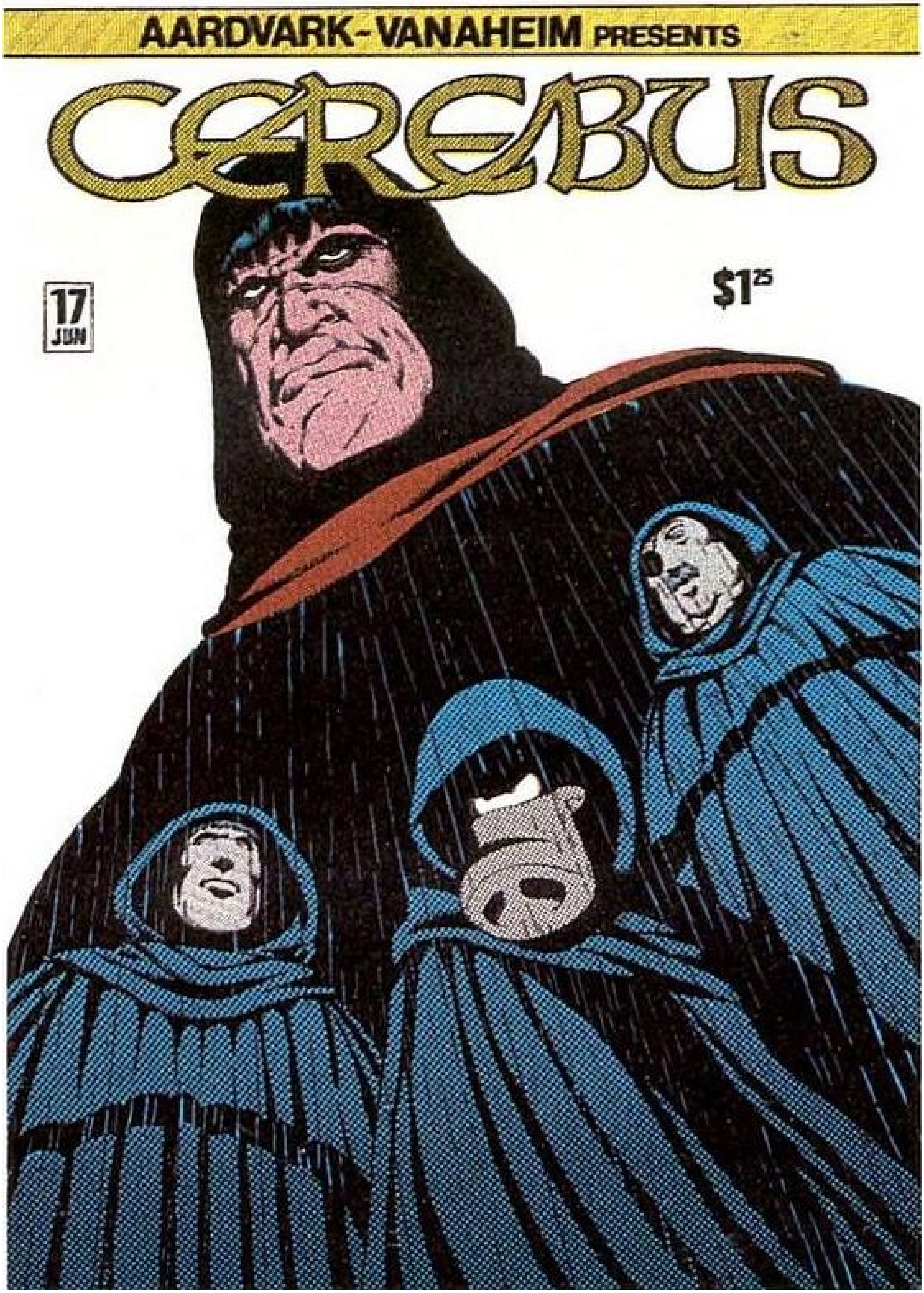
A number of people spotted an AP wirepress story on a new group known as the American Association of Aardvark Aficionados. Based in Westfield N.J. they have designated March 2-8 as National Aardvark Week (Deni even forgot to bake a cake). And this late bulletin on the group, dateline Philadelphia, announces that Jacqueline Tencza, 18, was named the second annual Miss American Aardvark, capturing the title, $25, an aardvark T-shirt and an aardvark calendar that begins in March. The event was held at the Philadelphia Zoo where contestants engaged in an aardvark calling contest, to try and coax Aarchie the Aardvark out of his cage. Anyone knowing of an address for this august body is encouraged to relay it to A-V Press so we can put them on our freebie list.

* * *

Bill Mantlo phoned the studio shortly after last issue went to press, requesting that I do a sample page of HOWARD THE DUCK for the magazine of the same name. I managed to get it done in my spare (hah) time and a few days later Lynn Graeme called to say it had been accepted as a frontispiece for a future issue. Special thanks to Gary Groth and Kim Thompson of the COMICS JOURNAL. It was the reproduced pages in Kim's Cerebus review that prompted Mantlo's phone call. I guess TCJ really is the fanzine the pro's read.



COMING SOON! Black Zeppelin 1 featuring the four-page ELFGUEST.


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
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CEREBUS

A Note From The Publisher

Here we are at issue seventeen already! Some days it's hard to believe how these issues go by faster and faster. Some nights when Dave and I are sitting and relaxing, we talk about how long other alternative books have lasted. Issue eighteen seems to be the big number, and it's not quite so far away now.

A few things for those of you who collect "Cerebus stuff". Our poster is now available from Now and Then Books. We have had trouble mailing them ourselves before, and Now and Then has some quite good mailing tubes. So finally we can start the business of mailing them out. By the time this issue is out, they should have everything ready for mailing. Their address is in their ad on the bottom of the Aardvarkian Age. If we find that we have room, there should be a picture of it at the bottom of the column (the poster is 4-colour, 17¾ x 11½).

Our newsletter is also finally on the go. Fred Patten out in California is doing it. If you wish to contribute to it, there's more info on this on the letters page. For anyone who wrote to me and said that they wanted to be on the mailing list, I'm sending your name and address to him. It should be out in October, sometime. (this is not like one of our deadlines, which tend to get changed alot. Fred is experienced and a good organizer. I'm quite sure he will keep with his deadlines.)

This issue is, we hope, the beginning of a nice steady hum of CEREBUS' coming out every month with only minor hassles. Dave and I are both looking forward to knuckling down and getting everything running smoothly.

This issue is, again, a continuation of the last issue. Actually, all the issues have been written that way. But on a bi-monthly schedule Dave let more time pass between issues. If we want to keep it that one of our years is one of Cerebus' years, then on a monthly schedule there is less happening between issues.

Things are progressing as well on the reprint book. Our format is pretty firm now. It will be 104 pages - issues 1-4 plus a new Cerebus story in the back that Dave is working on right now with Marshall Rogers. Dave will still do all the writing and will ink it. The book should be out by the end of July or early August, as soon as we can.

I think I've said enough this issue — if there's to be any room for the story, that is. And after all, isn't that why you're reading everything else first? To save the best for the last? So ... here is the best!!

Deni

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"CHAMPION"

CEREBUS No. 17 (June 1980)

I was really happy with this issue when I did it ... I'm still pretty happy with it. This was actually the time when my rendering techniques were at their peak. After this point I started moving into more stylized inking, but at this time I was still shooting for a very Hal Foster-brand of perfection having finished the Prince Valiant-influenced Silverspoon segment only a while before.

At this time I was going through a phase of watching television in the late afternoon. As Harlan Ellison has noted, late afternoon television has become a wasteland of monkey-mass situation comedies from years gone by. Happy Days, The Lucy Show, Bewitched, I Dream of Jeanie. Every major centre in North America endlessly repeats the same old shows day after day in cycles of several months. One pictures Mr Mooney, Endora, Larry Tate, Dr. Bellows and all the rest, trudging, wraith-like, awash in light blue radiation from Boston to Philadelphia, Toronto to Kingston, Walla Walla to Moose Jaw, never aging with the single purpose of sapping our intellectual will. "Plug into me" they seem to say "and you won't have to think for hours at a time".

It is this very quality ... the fact that you don't think while you're watching this stuff ... that makes it so easy to pirate characters from them for use in Cerebus. And the odd thing I noticed was that the secondary characters are always easier to steal, more inherently funny and consequently better-liked than the lead characters. Bill Daly (Roger Healy and Howard Borden) is funnier than Bob Newhart (Bob Hartley) and Tony Nelson (J.R. Ewing) rolled together.

So it was that I found myself in the odd (and I daresay unique) position of watching Hogan's Heroes and thinking simultaneously. Once I got over the novelty of it (thinking, that is), I started noticing how much I liked the Germans in Hogan's Heroes. It was something of a controversial show at the time, the charge being levelled that it diminished the Nazis to simple buffoons. In point of fact (were it not so ridiculous to ascribe intellectual thought to the show's creation) I was almost ready to see it as an insightful examination of the nature of the chain of command. Colonel Klink lived in mortal fear of any bureaucrat or S.S. officer arriving from Berlin, since any one of them could (evidently at a moment's notice) have him sent to the Russian front. Sergeant Shulz lived in mortal fear of Klink for the same reason.

None of this has much to do with the story you're about to read, but it does explain the German dialect I chose for the story.

The Commander Krull character was, on the one hand, my version of Conan the King. He was also patterned on Colonel Flagg from M*A*S*H (remember what I said about secondary characters?) Commander Krull, in addition, was the first of my characters to be living his own autobiography. I might have mentioned this somewhere else. I have come to think that most "heroes" are primarily "legends in their own minds". That is to say, while they protest endlessly that they're just doing their jobs and that any grand motivations ascribed to them are strictly the problem of certain individuals who don't know them very well, most of them actually keep careful track of their "image" on a day-to-day basis, basing their decisions, at least in part, on how it will appear in the "Legend of Me, Book Seven." These individuals can usually be picked out in a crowd by the presence of their "official biographer." This is a chap who usually doesn't get much attention until the hero is dead, at which time everyone, (somewhat naively) decides that he holds some degree of "truth" about the deceased.

In the case of the Moon Roach, the official biographer is a disassociated personality, and consequently more difficult to control (rather like William Manchester travelling around inside Robert Kennedy's head, privy to too many un-heroic thoughts and impulses). In the case of Krull, the biographer is really little more than a stenographer. Anyone who thinks this is a radical rather than minor caricaturing of the official biographer's role should read a few official biographies and compare them with a few unofficial ones.

The only other thing I could point out in this issue is the "rich man's dilemma" Cerebus faces when his horse breaks its leg. It would certainly have been easier for him to travel without the eight bags of gold, and considering he could have lived like a prince for months with only a half a bag, one can certainly see karma at work in the opening sequence. This was not the first time this has happened (though I noticed I didn't mention it in the narrative). Cerebus has treasure troves of gold buried all over Estarcion, under floor boards in abandoned tree stumps, etc. etc. left behind when he got tired of transporting them. Usually, as in this story, it was the lure of some new adventure that caused him to abandon what he had (though you can count on the fact that it wouldn't keep from compaining about being broke once lured away).

the aardvarkian age

by Michael Loubert

When the T'gitans reached Fluroc, the town's gates were shut. The Lord Daor Soiguinh, a Hsifan, held the town for Palnu. His heart was wroth, for he had but fifty trained men to defend the walls. These were light cavalrymen. Their horses were slain and the meat cured in preparation for a long seige.

On the third night of the siege, the T'gitans attempted a storming of the East or Sarthin Gate. They brought with them a felled tree, one end sharpened and shod in iron. They also brought with them torches, and crudely wrought ladders. When they neared the gate they raised a great shout and rushed forward.

The Lord Soiguinh, who was on the walls, heard the T'gitans' shout and hurried over with his fifty men. He reached the gate not long after the T'gitans did, and found all the townsfolk fled away. The gate was smote upon by the beam of wood, and the crude ladders were set upon the parapets.

But the Lord Soiguinh, his mind unclouded by fear, ordered his men to cast down the ladders, and shoot upon the barbarians who manned the beam of iron-shod wood, which they did. The T'gitans, surprised at this resistance, and so dismayed, left their ladders and engines of war, and fled the gate.

But when the sun arose, the council of the townsfolk beseeched Lord Soiguinh to parley with the barbarians without. The night assault had unnerved them, so all their thoughts were on saving their lives. The Lord Soiguinh refused, but the council exclaimed they would kill the Lord and his men, and open the gates themselves, if he did not do as they said.

So at mid-day the East Gate was opened, and Lord Soiguinh and the council walked out under a flag of truce, into the camp of the barbarians. And when these were in the camp, and, it is presumed, deep in council with the T'gitan chiefs, they were all slain, and the East Gate rushed by T'gitan horsemen. These held the open gate for their footmen to enter.

The town was sacked, and the larger part of the townsfolk put to the sword. A few escaped south, to spread the tale of woe.

- from "A History of the House of Isoles"

. . .

There seems to be some overlapping in fandom, something I have an especial interest in; comics and wargaming. Below is a listing, set according to the WRG Rules (Ancients) of the armies of Palnu and T'gita. The percentages are approximate.

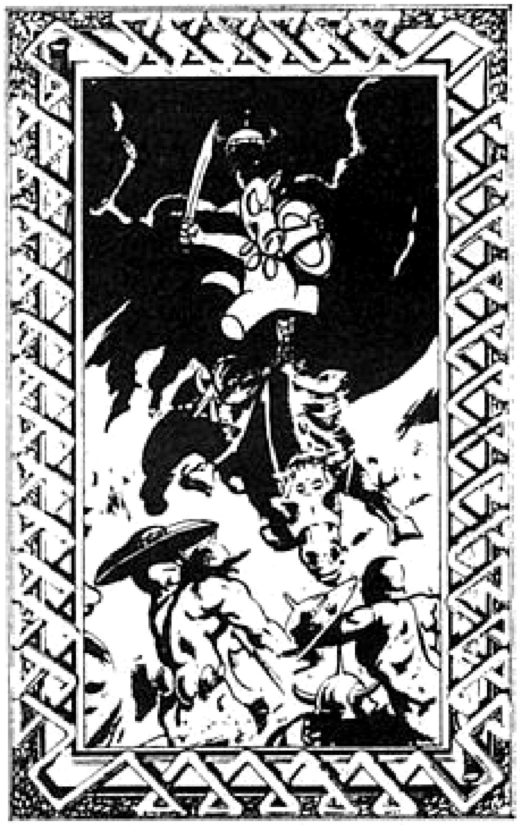
PALNU
- Pikemen: 'reg C' HI pike, shield. 50%
- Peltasts: 'reg C' LMI javelins, shield. 10%
- Conniptin Merc.: 'irreg C' LMI javelins, shield. 10%
- Light Inf.: 'reg C' LI bow, shield. 10%
- Palnin Cav.: 'reg C' HC Kontos, shield. 10%
- Cihnic Cav.: 'reg B' HC javelins, shield. 5%
- Hsifan Merc.: 'irreg. C' LC bow, shield. 5%

T'GITA
- Warriors: 'irreg C' LMI javelins, shield. 80%
- skirmishers: 'irreg C' LI javelins, shield. 10%
- Cavalry: 'irreg B' MC javelins, shield. 10%

For miniatures, I would use early Germans with a sprinkling of early Goths for the T'gitans.

The Palnin are a bit more difficult. Successor phalangites, peltasts and psiloi might do for the regular foot, celts for the Conniptins, Carolingians for the HC and Huns or Mongols for the Hsifans.

Next issue: A map of Palnu.



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AARDVARK COMMENT

- KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Dave & Denise,

I've put it off long enough. Now is the time to thank you for bringing a little more pleasure into my life. When I saw Star* Reach No. 1 I thought that finally comics had come of age. Top quality art and story even on a quarterly basis would be heaven for fans of the medium. Unfortunately the quality was not always consistent and the distribution schedule sometimes lagged months behind. The thrill was gone.

With Cerebus No. 1 I was captivated again, but wondered how long it could possibly last. Well, you've pulled it off and now on a monthly basis! I had my doubts on first learning of the monthly schedule, but with issue 15 you have my undying confidence. The art is as beautiful as ever, and the story one of my favourites. And that Lord Julius (is that mustache real or is it just painted on?) is simply hilarious. You've done a wonderful thing for comic fandom and I hope things work out so you can keep it up for a long time.

Thanks again for your wonderful aardvark and best of luck with his evolution.

Leonard Litteral
(no address with the letter)

Thank you, Leonard. As to Cerebus' evolution, the Earth-pig is of the opinion that once you've achieved perfection it's a good idea to quit before you mess up a good thing.

• • •

Dear Chroniclers of the Aardvarkian Age,

Today I ran across a copy of Cerebus 3 and eagerly snatched it up. It gave me a million laughs. This is the first I knew of the existence of the heroic Aardvarkian Age.

I am especially able to appreciate Cerebus 3, as Dave Smith (of ORON fame) and I are collaborating on a series of Red Sonja novels, scheduled to be published by Ace in 1981. We are aiming at bringing up the character of Sonja to at least a notch or two above the comic book character — more like Jerel of Joiry, say, or Howard's original "Red Sonya" conception.

So, I found your lampoon of the comic book Sonja hilarious. I'm passing Cerebus 3 on to my co-author, Dave Smith, who I'm sure will be equally cracked up by it. I hope you're still publishing and will keep the Hyvarkian lampoons rolling!

Dick Tierney
421 Dayton Ave., 4
St. Paul, MN 55102

***Somewhere** in St. Paul, there just has to be a comic book shop with a more recent issue than 3, doesn't there? I have a feeling I don't really want to know the answer to that question. The project you describe, all kidding aside, sounds very interesting and I look forward to seeing the results sometime in '81.*

• • •

Dear Dave,

I am glad to see you are back to publishing Cerebus once again. After the Comicart Convention in Philadelphia, Jan and I waited months for Cerebus 12 to come out. Now all of a sudden, 13 and 14 are available. In the next day or so, I am going to send an order off to Bud Plant and get those three issues.

Recently I saw a one page advertisement in the Buyer's Guide for what must have been all the original pages you had left from Cerebus 1-12. Does this mean you will now be selling all of the Cerebus pages to dealers or will you still give your fans first crack at them? Mine is purely a selfish question since I do want to buy an original Cerebus page for myself. However, I would prefer to buy from you rather than from a dealer. For instance, will any of the pages from Cerebus 13 and 14 be available from you? Could you possibly send me a postcard with a simple yes or no answer? By the time I get your answer Bud Plant should have gotten those issues to me.

In any case, I am glad that you are back into full production. For a while there it seemed that you had so many convention commitments and other projects that Cerebus had been set aside. Please do not let that happen. It would be a loss too great to measure.

Jack Neigenfind
101 Fried Drive,
Dauphin, Pa. 17018

This letter raises a number of interesting questions that I haven't really had time to answer in recent months, so all in one breath, here we go. 1) The confusion about our publishing schedule stems from the fact that issues 10 and 11 (when we were still bi-monthly) were done within a month of each other and I started issue 10 about two weeks before I ordinarily would have. Issue 12 was about a week and a half late getting to the printers, which made for a good three or four month gap between 11 and 12. 2) As a way of compensating for the lost income on issue 15, I sold all of the pages I had left from issues 1 through 15 to Harry Kremer, The Artman of New Jersey (Bruce Bergstrom) buys five pages from each issue before I make the pages available to the general public. So, if you really want to buy a page from me, your best bet is to list six alternates in order of preference from each issue and send it in to me. If, however, you are looking for a particular page from the most recent issue (like the one you're holding in your hands), your best bet would be to phone Bruce at (201) 947-1803 and reserve it. If he hasn't got it, call me at (519) 745-2113 and I'll reserve it for you. Complicated I know, but it's the best I can do with existing conditions. 3) Deni and I don't intend to go to any conventions for a long time to come — the book comes first. Conventions are definitely a spare time activity for us.

• • •

Dear Dave and Deni -

I only found Cerebus a few months ago, and now I'm busily spending my money on back issues! He's great — I'm afraid I can't make the expert comments on the art work, layout, etc. that many of your letters seem to, but I've enjoyed every issue I've seen. (Have you ever tried to explain to your mundane co-workers that what you are having hysterics over on coffee break is a comic book about an aardvark? Luckily most of them already knew I was crazy ... now all of them do.)

Since Cerebus doesn't care for human ladies under usual circumstances (and why should he? They aren't grey and furry and their ears are too short.) have you considered having Miss Piggy show up? A friend of mine suggested that they would make a good pair. I think Cerebus might like her, and I think she might like a change from green. Of course, she'd probably have a few complaints if she had to do without some of her usual luxuries.

I'm glad you're trying a monthly

AARDVARK COMMENT

- KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

schedule, but don't do yourselves permanent damage trying to stay on it ... I know I'd gladly put up with fewer issues a year if the alternative was none at all! Good luck with the financial side of it; that is always the worst part of life, and not just for comic books. We're cheering for you.

Meg Garrett
'The Court of Chaos'
910 W. Rosewood Ct.
Ontario, Calif. 91762

Actually I believe Cerebus met up with Miss Piggy at last year's Funny Animal's Club Roast for Mickey Mouse. I'm pleased to report that he took her three falls out of five.

• • •

Dear Dave, Deni & Cerebus,

A week or so ago, a friend of mine, knowing of my predilection for Groucho Marx, shoved a comic into my hands. "You've got to read this," he said, "with a Groucho imitation." To forestall him from reading it out loud to me, in public yet, I opened Cerebus 14 to its first page and was interested. By the second page I was riveted and by the third page I was enthralled. Lord Julius is the best Grouch I've come across in a long time. Yet, it wasn't the pseudo-Groucho who carried the comic, but rather the short, grey, furry member of the species Orycteropus. In a literary equivalent of the "munchies" I grabbed every Cerebus I could find.

It was also a very nice surprise to find one of my favorite Marvel characters in issue 14.

Congratulations on everything, best of luck. Mazel tov. Blessed be and Brill (?) Brill, Brill.

P.S. Beware of paper cuts.
Diane Morris
(alias Pitstop
Roundtrip and
Alias Smith)
6319 Peace Pipe,
San Antonio, Tx
78238

Interested Riveted and Enthralled? Didn't the Four Nightingales share star billing with them on the Orpheum Circuit? Who'll ever forget them? They don't make comedy teams like that anymore.

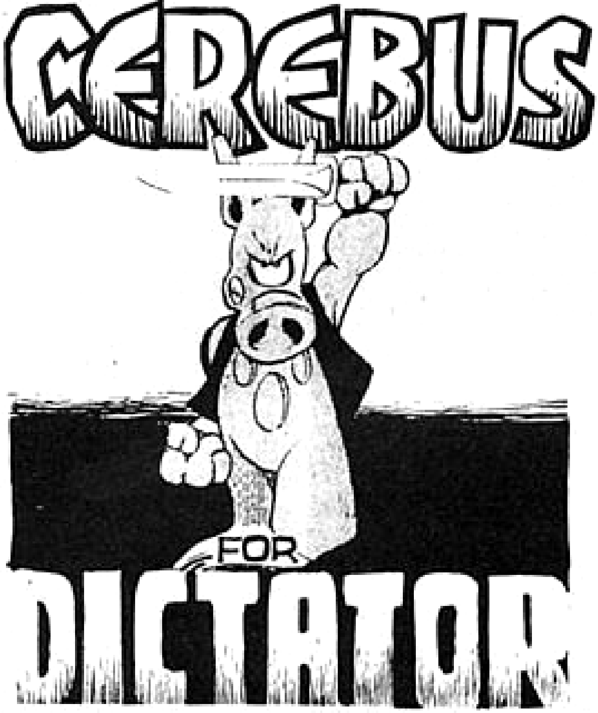
• • •

NOTES

The newsletter is here! Let the bells ring out, etc. Our culprit is Fred Patten,
Culver City, California 90230. He will be accepting news items, drawings and opinions relating to Cerebus until September 1st for the premiere issue. Subscriptions can be had for $2.00 for four issues. Make your cheques payable to Fred.

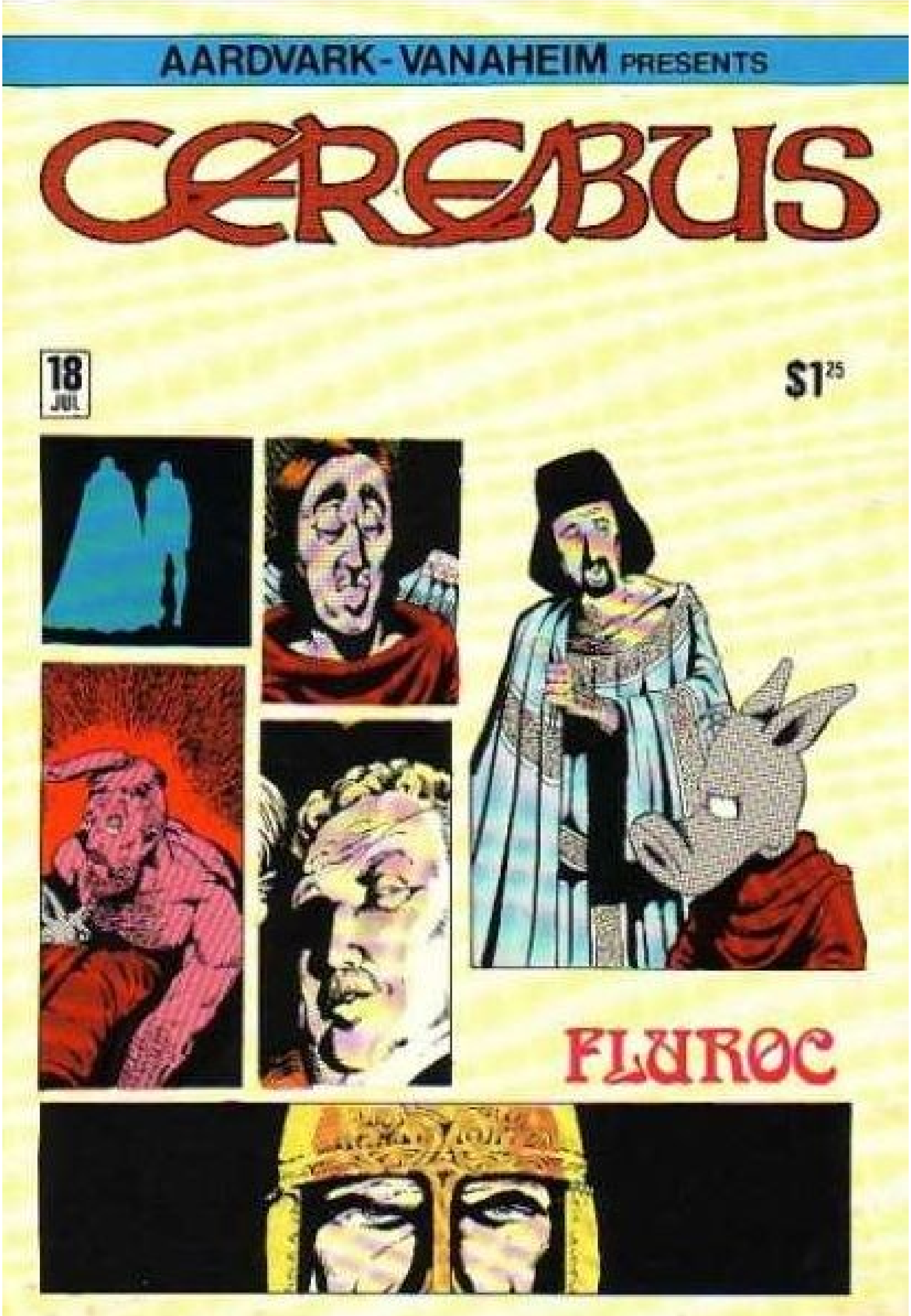
Final plans for the SWORDS OF CEREBUS volume are taking shape. Contrary to the information I sent to Dean Mullaney at COMICS FEATURE (sorry Dean) the book will not be one of the monthly issues. It will more or less be A-V's answer to the idea of a Cerebus summer annual. The first issue will be 104 pages, reprinting Cerebus 1-4, and there will be an eight to ten page story never before seen by human, etc. etc. entitled "Diamondback". This look at the Earth-pig's favourite pastime will be written, inked and lettered by me, over layouts by Marshall (Don MacGregor fan club) Rogers. As a matter of fact that's what I'm supposed to be typing right now, so this is definitely the end of this issue's letter column. 'Bye.

T-SHIRT OFFER



With Reagen and Carter looking like shoo-ins for their nominations, are you considering voting for "None of the above?" Dismayed because Pierre Trudeau has just taken out a twelve year mortgage on 24 Sussex Drive? Have you got the Tweedledee or Tweedledum Blues? Look no further than your nearest Earth-pig. Cerebus lays it all on the line with his campaign for dictator. Any protest from the opposition benches and he'll have them put to the sword. Now you can join the grass-roots movement with your own "Cerebus for Dictator" T-shirt: $5.75 ea. + $1.00 postage and handling (Michigan residents please add 4% sales tax). 10% off for orders of 10 or more. Canadian customers must pay duty upon receipt. Comes in red, orange, yellow, kelly green, cobalt blue and white. S,M,L,XL; please list first and second color choices. Please allow four weeks for delivery. Send orders to: M. Peterson, Ann Arbor, MI, 48104, USA.

THE NO-NONSENSE CANDIDATE ... FOR THE NO-NONSENSE VOTER!


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
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FLUROC

CEREBUS

A Note from the Publisher

In May, Mike Friedrich came up to Toronto from New York on a business trip for Marvel. (he works there now, you know) When he phoned Dave and I about going out for dinner while he was here, it seemed a strange coincidence. For at that time Dave was working on issue eighteen, which would tie Cerebus with Mike's Star *Reach as the longest running alternative comic. It feels like we've come quite a ways since issue one.

With this issue, I feel that Dave has begun to give a clearer picture of the individual outlook of the book. The humour is continuous and Cerebus proves once again that a sword alone does not a conqueror make. Personally, I have always preferred a barbed tongue to a pointy stick.

Now that Cerebus is monthly, Dave has been spending an enormous amount of time in his studio. He works from one in the afternoon until seven, comes home for dinner and one hour relaxing, then back to the studio until three in the morning. I've always felt that your living environment is where you spend the most time (obviously the studio), so we have moved it to a nicer location. I must say that he's quite pleased with the new studio and he can't wait to move into it. Now he gets to look at people on the street instead of on rooftops. Ah, it takes so little to make an artist happy!

And speaking of making Dave happy, number one on his list is doing this book, so get to it and read it!!! And I'll see ya next issue.

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark-Vanaheim Press, 221 Queen St. S., No. 1401, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Published monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents © 1980 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 No. 18, July 1980.

"FLUROC"

CEREBUS No. 18 (July 1980)

This was a strange one.

I remember thinking at the time that I did this one "WOW. That was very strange. Someday when I do the collection of reprints of Cerebus and I get up to issue No. 18 this will be a very easy one to write an introduction for". I might also have thought to myself "Last issue, on the other hand, I will recall not in the least and should probably jot something down, lest I end up jabbering for several paragraphs about afternoon television" but this would be crediting my today-self with more concern for my four-years-from-now self than he actually tends to have.

My standard procedure when starting an issue has always remained pretty much the same. I write at the top of a piece of paper

Cerebus No. blah blah page one-panel one

and then I write down everything I have figured out about the issue. Then when I run out of ideas, I figure out how many pages I've got. Like so........

Cerebus: 'yadda yadda.
Elrod: I say, yadda yadda. Yadda, that is
Astoria: Yadda Yadda.
Astoria: Yadda!!!
Cerebus: blah. blah.
Astoria: blah blah yadda yadda

Depending on how fast I want the story to go, that could be a page and a half or two panels.

With number eighteen, I sat down and started writing and didn't stop. It was a Sunday evening. When I was done, I had a pile of pages that were an outline for a complete story, and went and proudly told Deni I had the whole story done in a couple of hours. I couldn't believe it. At this time I was setting aside a full week and a half to write the story. Monday I didn't do anything. Probably sat down and watched Bewitched and Hogan's Heroes and the Price is Right. The next day I thought I had better check the story.

It was a long meandering story that took place in a library in one of the wealthier houses in the newly captured city of Fluroc. Cerebus would be there looking for maps and such to help with the planned invasion of Palnu. Strange things would start happening, idols falling on people. T'gitans falling through trapdoors. Everyone disappearing. At the end it would turn out that there was a rich merchant who had lined his home with secret passages so that when Fluroc was invaded, he had a place to hide with his treasure. The only problem was, the barbarians are staying in his house, so after a few weeks his cache of food is running out, and he's trying to figure how to escape the house and get some more food or hide somewhere where food was available. Finally he's discovered and all of his stuff is taken and he's executed and Cerebus has enough money to reinforce his invasion.

When I went back and read the notes, I couldn't figure out how to make all the disappearances funnier. Then I started thinking that if all of the soldiers disappeared from around him, Cerebus would go out to the T'gitan camp and get some more men. So I decided the rich merchant would be discovered only after a few soldiers disappeared. Then I thought, "wait a minute. How long is it going to take to explain what's been going on when the merchant is found". I jotted down some dialogue. It came out to about four pages. Another page for the execution, discovery of the treasure, Cerebus' joy over finding liquid assets. Then I figured five pages for the disappearances, two pages for Lord Julius' reaction to the invasion of Fluroc. In addition I had written some stuff for a character named Graus who was going to wander around telling Cerebus about how Stromm was a God, to emphasize how this whole invasion-thing got started.

Over the course of the next several hours, I started trying to come up with ways for all of it to follow in sequence, be funny and still allow room for Cerebus to react and do interesting things. So far, he was standing around looking for books and running around looking for his soldiers whenever one disappeared. I started trying to write funny arguments "Where did he go".

"Me not see. Turn away one second, friend disappears." I was a good dozen panels away from an argument with that and that only accounted for one disappearance.

It was Tuesday around suppertime when I decided I would have to write something else. It just wasn't panning out. So I started writing down Graus' dialoque with Cerebus and it worked out to five pages. Fifteen to go.

By Wednesday evening I had gone back to writing the "rich merchant in the walls" story again. I did three disappearance scenarios and then designed his house.

By Thursday afternoon, I had scrapped all of that again and was trying to think of another story. By Thursday night I was alternating writing the "rich merchant in the wall" story and writing down new ideas. When the day was over, the "rich merchant in the wall" story was just shy of forty pages written single-spaced and the other ideas weren't past the "let's draw Cerebus with a funny hat and see if it triggers something" stage.

This went on through the weekend until Sunday night (a full week after I had "finished" writing the issue -- cover sketch and all). The next day, according to my schedule, I was going in to draw the first two pages. I arbitrarily decided to use the dialogue with Graus for the first four pages, which meant I had Monday and Tuesday taken care of and went in to watch the Sunday night equivalent of HOGAN'S HEROES and BEWITCHED. Tuesday I finished the first four pages and went home trying to figure out what I was going to draw tomorrow. I wanted to watch television, so I decided to move the "Meanwhile back in Palnu" epilogue back to pages five and six from pages nineteen and twenty. Wednesday I drew those pages. Thursday I marked time with a page of Gudre showing up and Cerebus telling him he hadn't been able to come with anything and Gudre telling Cerebus HE hadn't been able to come up with anything either. I was desperate enough for a new idea to fall back on allegorical confession.

Michael Loubert, (Deni's brother) dropped by the studio to try and help. I would get him to come up with political, social and environmental background to trigger ideas for stories and keep the material accurate. I explained that the story took place after the invasion of Fluroc in the city. I asked him to describe the scene for me of a city after a raid by barbarians.

"Dead bodies everywhere. The ones still alive being tortured. The corpses would be rotting and probably starting to smell bad. Some of them would be dismembered. Blood everywhere."

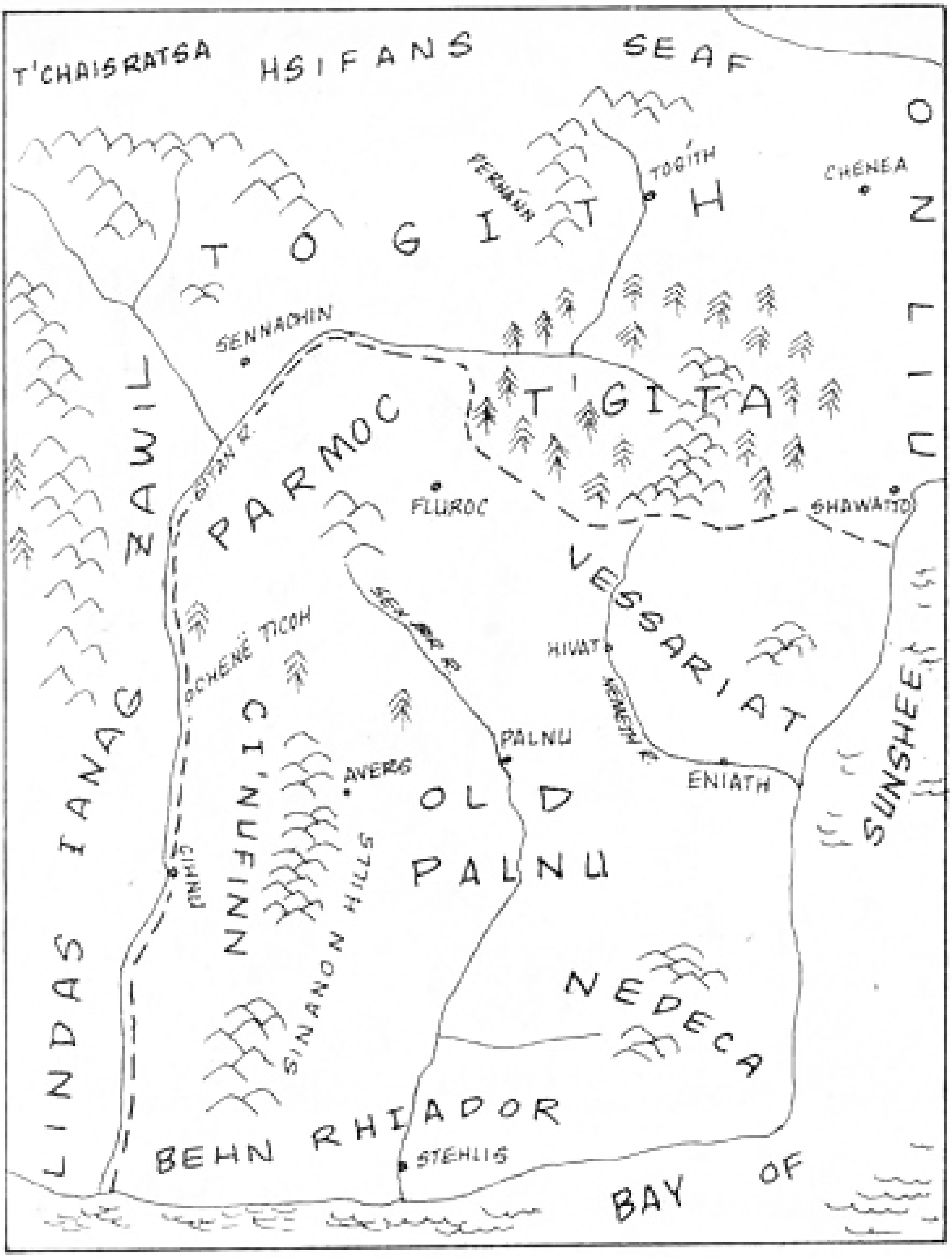
If you can think of a less-likely jumping-off point for humour, I'd sure like to hear it.

I needed something from outside the city, then, if everything inside the city was so depressing. Why would someone be coming to the city. To sell things.

"How about a caravan of merchants show up?"
"Okay," Michael said, his tone implying "Hey it's your comic book"
"Cerebus would want to keep them out of the city, but they have to go in, because they'll be suspicious. He has to explain what all the bodies are doing covered in blood."
A Plague!! Of course, Cerebus would convince them that all the bodies had died of a plague that makes you burst open and die. It was a scam that decidedly required Earth-pig level audacity. I wrote the story down over the weekend and finished it off over the next week and a half.

Whenever people ask me "Where do you get your ideas?", this is the story that comes to mind.

Palnu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AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W6

Dear Marvel Employee:

Recently the copyright laws were changed to provide more protection for artists and writers who are the sole creators of a work. The new law makes a very clear distinction between artists who create and produce a piece of art or writing on their own, and those who do work under supervision, as part of a collective work or series or as one of many contributors to a work. Creative people who fall in the latter category are considered employees-for-hire. All creative people at Marvel are employed on that basis.

In order to insure our continued ownership of the material we produce and publish, and to clearly define our position under the new law, we have drawn up a work-order agreement (enclosed).

Please write in the date, your name and address at the top in the appropriate blanks, sign at the bottom under "supplier", and return as soon as possible.

This agreement does not change any of Marvel's policies toward freelance creative people. It is only intended to restate the relationship that has always existed between Marvel and its freelance creative staff.

Our policies of returning artwork, paying reprint money, and providing insurance are exactly the same as before.

Please feel free to consult a lawyer and/or call me to discuss this.

Jim Shooter,
Cadence Publishing
575 Madison Avenue,
New York, N.Y.

Oh yassuh massa — Ise returnin' yo' contrack right away — oh lordy yass yass yass.

• • •

Dave,

You raised a couple of points in your comment in issue 15 that we found interesting regarding Marvel. When we began putting ELFQUEST out, we thought that it might be a bit fashionable to take potshots at the mainstream comics companies from our position down in the bushes, and we did from time to time. We've learned, though, that that particular attitude just isn't justified any more. Marvel the corporate giant is still made up of at least some folks who are real and caring, and it's they who feel the barbs most and deserve it least. So we stopped. Besides, it's energy better expended in other ways, and who knows, maybe WaRP Graphics the corporate midget will be a target someday. Who needs enemies?

Richard and Wendy Pini
2 Reno Road,
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Potshots? Bushes? Me? Heaven forbid!

• • •

Dear Dave,

Who is that masked man? An imposter to be sure. Yes, but an earth-pig all the same. Dave, meet Aardvarks Anomalous, the last hope for uncivilized aardvarks in the Midwest.

Aardvarks Anomalous — for we are quite abnormal as aardvarks go, i.e., we are not short, grey, nor furry. I was the first. Intrigued by a fanzine ad for **Cerebus 8**, I became an instant groupie. Naturally my first convert was my hairdresser — who else can you trust? But the movement hasn't stopped; since this picture three new members have been accepted and more are on the way. Cerebus has become the hero of our tiny, all-male college in Watertown (never mind where that is), replacing the "$1.98 Beauty Contest" for all-around popularity. (And some of those 1.98 beauties have some very good all-arounds.) Cerebus even planted and dedicated our class tree. A legend in his own time.

However, I ought to apologize for the plagiary on the shirts; but I think the cover from 8 is some of the best work you've ever done. Besides, you wouldn't spank a few loyal boys for making bootleg T-shirts of their only true hero, now would you? Or maybe you would; that could be fun too. But don't you worry, I've got a great white silkworm that guards all my screens from piracy.

We just would like to commend you on a job well done. Cerebus has made me proud of my celibacy, as well as humoring us all more than babies' bottoms in the springtime. That little guy's got spunk. There are just two questions: 1) Did you discontinue the Cerebus series that was running in THE BUYER'S GUIDE? We would be lost without it. I thought your slightly effeminate Prince Valiant was one of your better characters — will he ever make it into one of the books? 2) Where does Cerebus keep his sword when not in use? It has created a great problem for me in costume. All of a sudden it seems to appear in his hand from nowhere. Oh well anything can happen in comics, right?

Sometime I'll have to try apricot brandy from a navel. A little belly-button lint might improve its somewhat nauseating flavor. With my luck she would have an "outsie" anyhow.

Lots of love and chain mail bikinis,

AARDVARKS ANOMALOUS
812 Richards Avenue,
Watertown, Wisconsin
53094

I've finally figured out what's wrong with comics. All of the groupies are celibate males driving with one headlight out. If I'd have known that four years ago, I would have enrolled in a plumbing course. At least (from what I've heard) plumber groupies are female. Answers to your questions: 1) Wait until the T'Gitans get closer to Palnu. 2) Right.

• • •

Dave & Deni,

Just finished reading Cerebus 15 (What a fantastic cover!) and as is now the norm with each issue, LOVED IT!!! I don't want to ramble on too long, so I'll just ask my question and be ramblin' on (chortle.) In one issue a while back, Deni mentioned that someone was supposed to be doing some sort of Cerebus paperweight, or some such thing. Has this ever come about?

Finally a serious proposition. I'd like to offer whatever services I may provide to help the mag survive. God knows I'd hate to see yet another quality project go down the tubes.

Punchem innaface.

Bryan Reeves
1813 Peach,
St. Charles MO. 63301

We have the only paperweight right now. We're still trying to figure out how to ship them so you don't end up buying seven dollars worth of Aardvark parts (build your own! It's fun! It's nerve-wracking!). As to your serious proposition, the biggest problem we face is the fact that no one seems to know that we're monthly and available from Sea Gate Distributors. It is a very easy matter for any

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

comic shop to contact Sea Gate and get the latest issue shipped direct to them. Each issue becomes available around the 10th of the month on the cover. (i.e. Phil and Jonni should receive this issue by the 10th of July). If your local comic shop never seems to have the most current issue, encourage them to contact Sea Gate directly. Phil gives thirty-day terms and looks great in a Captain Marvel costume. With THE COMIC READER refusing to list Cerebus, Elfquest and others in its top 100 specialty shop list, it's really up to you folks to make sure that a condition of "out of sight out of mind" doesn't develop. Aardvarks, ho!

. . .

Dear Deni & Dave,

I follow the adventures of Deni & Dave almost as avidly as I follow those of Cerebus. Let me just say that I for one (and I would bet **lots** more people) appreciate every drop of blood, sweat and tears (an A-1 flaming cliche, but you get my meaning) that you folks put into Cerebus. It's definitely a high class comic. I don't know much about comics, but I can recognize topnotch quality! Though I didn't think it was possible to improve on a wonderful thing, the art, story and humor of **Cerebus** have gone steadily up. I thought Elrod was magnificent, but the Priest of Tarim and Lord Julius are classic (to use an original term). I've absolutely fallen in love with Cerebus from my first making acquaintance and I would run off with him in a minute, were it not for you-know-who who is waiting for him to come back to her (sigh!). Keep it coming.

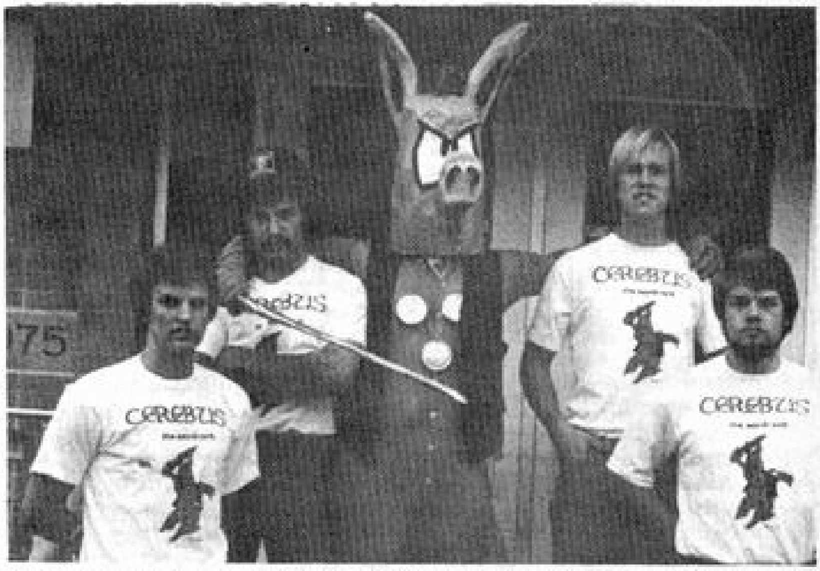
Rayna Alsberg,
531 North Main,
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

I think I'm starting to get the idea. I get all the celibate males driving with one headlight out and old Snout-face gets all the groupies from Ann Arbor. Oh yeah? Well let's see you draw the next issue you short, grey gigolo!, (pretty soon I'm going to have enough disassociated personalities for a bridge game).

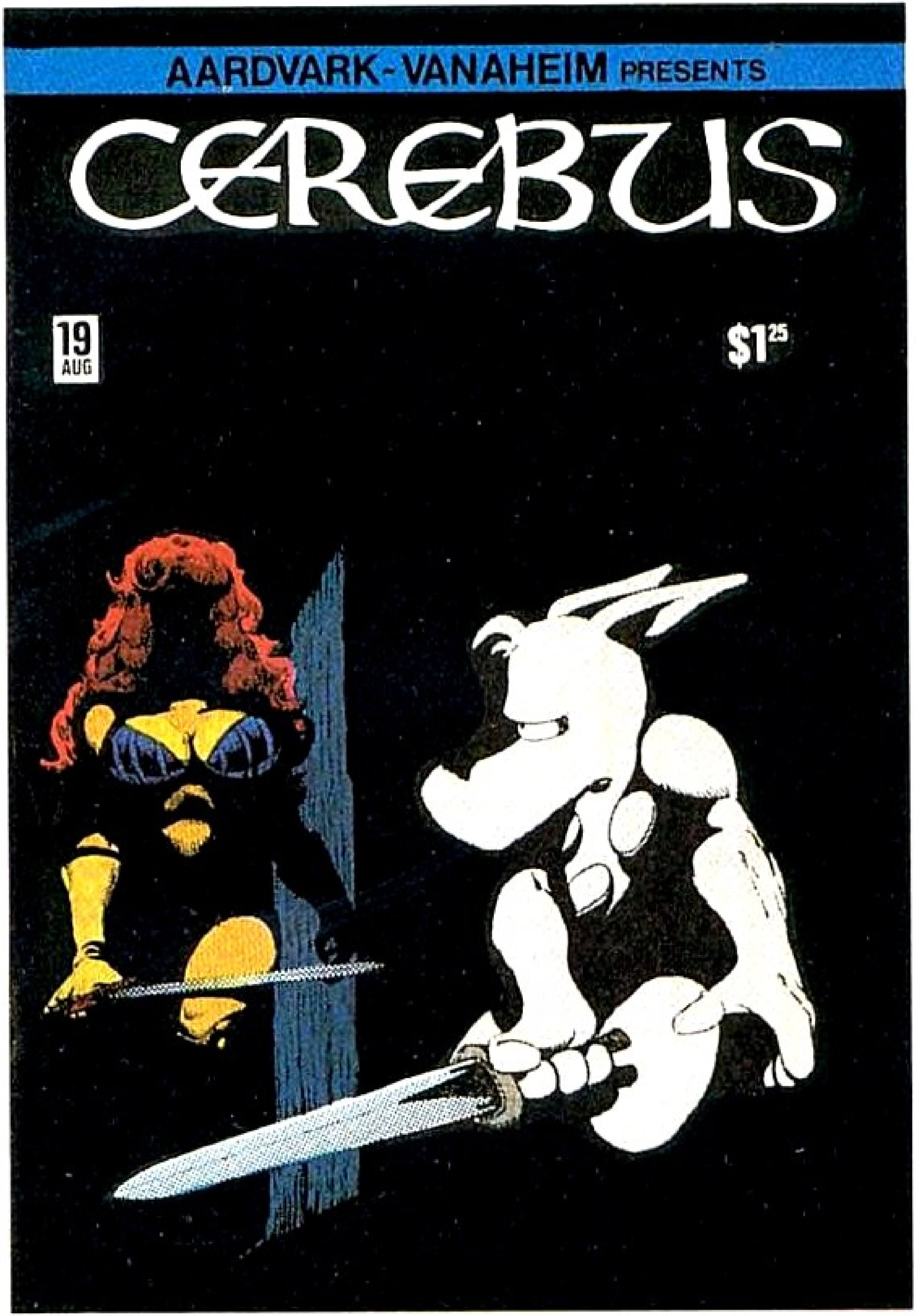
NOTES

Okay, I admit it. I do take potshots from the bushes. I was in something of a dilemma about printing the first two letters this issue. Just to make sure no one goes off the deep end a) it was a joke and b) I only did it because both letters came in on the same day. I too know a number of people who are part of Marvel Comics and their attitudes on the company are as widely different as one could be on a given subject. It ranges from Gene Day who enjoys inking for Marvel and whose dedication and sincerity I would never question in a million years to Howard Chaykin whose interest in the company is limited to what he himself is doing and what Walt Simonson (with whom he shares a studio) is doing on BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. I think it fair to say that anyone who is making their living from comic books is, at some point or another, deciding their own positions vis-a-vis Marvel and DC. I have to admit that I was rather lukewarm on the whole issue of the work-made-for-hire contract — until it came time for me to sign one of them. I wouldn't for a minute dump on anyone who did — or in fact dump on anyone working in the offices or devoting their lives to these companies. But I discovered that my feelings about my own work ran pretty deep and I found that ownership of that work was something that was important to me. I hope that Richard and Wendy will understand that I am not out to make enemies of the people at Marvel, from Jim Shooter down to the janitor. But that I don't share their opinion on the composition of the company. To me there is something innately terrifying about two companies virtually controlling the output of comic books in North America. Terrifying that they own, lock, stock and letratone, some of the best ideas that sincere creative people have come up with. Terrifying that Steve Gerber signed the back of his cheque for a certain Man-Thing story and can now watch his creation being manipulated and distorted into something he never intended it to be — without the recourse of picking up his duck and going home. I respect Richard and Wendy for doing their own books, for retaining ownership and trying to build their company in such a way that other people will someday have that same chance. I also understand and respect all the members of the Guild who are back working for Marvel and DC despite the conditions that exist. I just don't happen to think that the system in operation now is the best thing for this medium and that it is not the most conducive way to get the best from the creative talents that exist. Quite the opposite, it seems to encourage half-assed efforts in order to guarantee that you are not surrendering your rights to something of value. And how many of us, Steve Gerber included, could know in advance that our ducks were of any value?

I'd be interested in any opinions on this from our readers. We'll print the best ones.



Pictured above are David Sellnow (the grey one in the middle), Steve Soukup, Carl Balge, Jon Tesch, and Dave Leistekow. David Sellnow will sell now the T-shirts pictured for 5.50 plus 1.00 postage from the address at the end of his letter.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CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Since the last issue a few things have happened that I thought you might be interested in. One of them is that we have decided to cancel the convention that we were trying to organize here in Kitchener. There just isn't enough free time between issues to do a good job of it at this late a date. We will have one, but when is a good question. Hopefully next year we will be more organized, but I wouldn't count on it. Actually, we do want to go ahead with it in the future. I'll keep you posted if things start moving.

In the last two issues we have put in mention of two different T-shirts that fans have let us know about. I now have received through the mail my sample of each one, and I must say that I'm really pleased with both. I wear them often and hope that these people are swamped with orders, for they deserve to be.

During the time that Dave was working on this issue, Dave received in the mail a notice that he had been awarded by the Small Press Writers and Artists Association (SPWAO) for best writing in the comics field. Not too long afterwards he received in the mail a very nice plaque from them. We are both very pleased with this recognition of Dave's work, and so I wanted to share with all of you the pleasant news of it.

I have been hearing from some people lately that they were having trouble getting their copies of issues 16 and 17. There was a small mix-up there because of our switching over to monthly, but things should be in order by the time this issue is out. Please don't hesitate to let distributors know if you are not getting yours on time. Sometimes it's the best way they have to make sure everything is getting out. (They are human, you know).

All in all, that's about all I have to say this issue. I had better finish this page off, so I can get to bed. It seems that once again I am the last to get my bit done for the issue, and the rest is sitting around me, waiting to be brought to the printers tomorrow morning. I hope that you enjoy this issue, the humour is again in control of the issue. That is, if anything with Cerebus has really the ability to control that little furry beast!

Deni

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published by Aardvark-Vanaheim Press, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Published monthly. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents © 1980 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 No. 19, August 1980.

"She - Devil In The Shadows"

CEREBUS No. 19 (August 1980)

This is when the story started to get a little weird. I'd like to apologize to all of you right now who had been reading Cerebus since the first issue and picked up 19, 20, 21 and 22 and figured someone must have slipped something in your drinking water.

It all started with Perce.

As I said before, this is right around the time that the rendering was starting to become the most dominant element of the book (just as, in "High Society", the dominant elements are the design and the dialogue). At the risk of belabouring the point, this stemmed from Hal Foster's Prince Valiant drawings. I was trying to give a more realistic edge to the pictures, so I began work on sketches for the major characters. As I was to decide with Astoria later on, I decided to try and draw Perce as a real-real person (for reference, I class Cerebus as fantasy-fantasy, Elrod as fantasy-real, Lord Julius as real-fantasy, Filgate as real-fantasy, The Moon Roach as fantasy-real. Get the idea?)

So I decided Perce had to be real-real, about nineteen or twenty years old and that she would have the distinction of being a Cirinist pretending to be a Kevillist pretending to be a Cirinist. That's Togith for you.

So I decided, why not be like the REAL cartoonists (Hal Foster springs readily to mind) and draw a real person as Perce. I decided on Deni's sister, Karen for a number of reasons. We had pictures of her, she was the right age, (She was the person who suggested "Aardvark Press" leading to the decision to do an aardvark mascot) and (ho, ho, ho) she would be easy to draw. I never made that mistake again. If I draw real people in the strip now, I always make them caricatures. It's not that the results were all that bad, but it took an awful lot of effort to make the pictures barely adequate.

But the discipline required in learning how to draw a real person in cartoon form meant that I had a lot of time to contemplate the Kevillists and the Cirinists (since Togith is a major center for both groups). The more I worked on getting the pictures right, the more complicated the Cirinists and the Kevillists got and the more complicated the story line I was working on got.

I decided to do a parody of Frank Thorne's Ghita because while I wouldn't say I was fond of 1994 the magazine, nor a particular advocate of the kind of stories Frank was doing, I was very fond of the way Frank's artwork made such great strides when he switched to black and white from colour comics. I conceived the whole story in a short space of time, my major concern being to produce one good silly self-contained issue before I went off on this complicated political piece of over-lapping and inter-locking factions.

Lord Gorce was created (and developed further in this issue) to establish what would appear to be a major threat to Lord Julius' control of Palnu. I wanted to show that Lord Julius (like Elrod) always lands on his feet and that (unlike Elrod) it is as a result of his own sense of political timing and manipulation of resources at hand, even if that's just his own imagination (as seen by page twelve). It was my way of indicating that he was to be taken seriously by the reader even though his earlier appearances painted him as incompetent. After all, a leader who is perceived as incompetent is more likely to be underestimated by potential rivals. The impact of his endless successes, domestically and in the other parts of Estarcion can be seen in "High Society". "Nothing succeeds like success" as the saying goes.

Anyway, I started building the cornerstones for all the intrigue in this issue with Perce (she's not really a prostitute, but I won't go into that now). It was eventually to lead to my decision to do "High Society" in an attempt to frame a larger context for the story and find some way to address all the intrigues and power struggles at once. As I write this, I am half-way through issue 50 and it contains only one helpful line of dialogue.

I tried to explain the problem a while ago by explaining that most of the factors involved are secret societies--to put it in a more modern context, it is like a secret cell of Soviet spies in the U.S. government hiring North Vietnamese and Cuban infiltrators to find out if the Red Chinese embassy in Japan is really spying for the Lithuanians in an attempt to find out if the KGB was behind the plot to kill the Pope and hire more Afghanistan refugees to double-check the rumours about the John Birch Society joining forces with the Mafia to break the stranglehold the Teamsters have on the underground network of solidarity supporters in Moose Jaw.

Come to think of it, three hundred issues might not be enough.

the aardvarkian age

by Michael Loubert

The T'Gitans were originally Borealans, from up north. They were a mercenary band, with camp followers and other hangers-on. Wandering about the Feldwor states, they settled in Seaf for awhile, but left to avoid the civil war that broke out there. Togith allowed them in.

The following is an excerpt from "The Book of Twenty-Three". Its author was a certain Suenteus Po, an adventurer who lived about one hundred fifty years before Cerebus.

Lord Po was residing at the time at the court of the Prince of Togith. He had quickly gained the favour of the Prince, becoming a figure of some power and influence. Below, he rises to an informal early morning meeting with the Prince.

So when I awoke I turned over and lit up a good pipeful of Tai Chi Yellow. Felt better instantly. Bawled for Henh, noticed the room was blue this morning. Bad omen.

Out to the door was a chest. On the chest mine own trusty scimitar. By Tarim! as they say here in Togith, they didn't make scimitars like that in the Feld Lands! I distinctly remember thinking. Then Henh (almost sings) came in and I said

"Blue for today!"

"Yes, Majesty," he replied, for I had told him I was a King back home in Ziltháday though these barbarous Feld account me but a Lord.

So blue it was, sword left behind and down to the chambres of the Prince of Togith. Broke my fast on cold meat and colder news.

There were problems with the Dagithans or Tagithans (some such barbarous name). This I knew. Borealan mercenaries in Cit Learagh, having fled the troubles in Seaf. They were being enrolled in the army, their wives and children hostages. Only temporarily.

"They grow uneasy," wheezed the scaly old fart (or maybe it was the smoke I had) but I knew more than the Prince. Was I not his trusty advisor and good right arm for nothing?

"Never a fear," I exclaimed. "We be civilized folk, more than a match for any tribe of barbarous northmen. Ah, uneasy, you say?"

His hand prodded at the meat before him. "We have their kin in our power," he croaked. "Yet they dare lay charges of corruption upon mine own officials."

I smiled, to hide the turmoil within. They were mine own paid officials, not his - where did he get his information? Wait! What his own - no, no guilt on my doorstep. Can I not think straight? There was heavy breathing - his or mine?

I blinked. The Prince was staring at his plate. Old dotard. Mayhap he will die of Pleurisy soon and I will be spared much travail.

"The officials. The charges."

"Eh?" I blinked again. Oh yes, the Dagithans. Dog, was he on to something? My knees were shaking - the cold, no doubt.

"I have heard the magistries in Cit Learagh have forbidden grain to the Dagithan mercenaries. They are starving. Am I not the Prince? Can I trust no one?"

What an opening. "You can trust me, your Grace. I will dig into this disgrace. These good folk should not be reduced To eating grass!" Dogs know what diet is in far Boreala. Tree bark and boiled leaf?

The Prince laughed. "Trust you? You best trust me. Come to Togith Court, a stranger with no friends, no past ..."

"Just my remarkable intelligence, steadfast loyalty -"

"And complete modesty." He snorted and poked at my own plate of untouched meat. "You are loyal because if I weren't here you would be naked before the wolves of this court."

Ah, but you didn't know about Lord Arnoc. But I said instead, "When shall I leave for Cit Learagh, your Grace? "I was coming down, but another pipeful would be good on the road.

"I will give the matter further thought," replied the Prince. "The council must be consulted, and you must be provided with the proper credentials." His head dropped, then flopped suddenly onto his plate.

Dead already? I thought, but my limbs were frozen. I could feel the wet of the frost. No weapon, sword up in the room. I'm the only witness; ba! the only suspect for some. The court would have loved to have seen me broken on the wheel. My mind raced - possible future-lines, things to do, escape routes planned.

You see, my mind was quite calm, but my damned legs refused to move.

I heard the door behind me flung open. My shoulders tensed - a natural reaction, of course. I was preparing myself for decisive action.

"My Lords! The Dagithans!" I nearly jumped out of my skin. It was but a messenger.

The Prince's head shot up. It's amazing what sound waves can do to the unanimated corpse! Only he wasn't dead (Dog take it!) and his mouth worked for a minute.

"The Prince has had a minor fit," I soothed. "What of these -"

"The Dagithans! They have massacred the Cit Learagh garrison and are marching on Togith, in open defiance!"

I heard the Prince gargle, thumping the wooden table with both his puny fists, then, eyes staring, crumple onto the floor. Pushing the messenger aside, I checked the body for signs of life. None.

"I'm afraid he's really dead this time. What timing."

The messenger just scratched his head. "Oh, shit."

* * *

Next month, Lord Po finds life in Togith becoming dangerous. Instead of merely confusing.

By Cerebus' time, the Principality of Togith had become the main clearing house for Feldan mercenaries. The Prince had become a figurehead, and the real power was wielded by various Barons who had become involved in trade (mercenary and otherwise). They had originally been rather enterprising, lawless types who had pushed out west, but they eventually settled down and organized.

AARDVARK COMMENT

-KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Dave and Deni:

I didn't expect you to be able to maintain quality on a monthly schedule, but I was wrong. I just got 16-17 and the art is at a new high, particularly the party scenes of 16 and the splash panel beginning 17. The plotting is also up to that of the Jaka issue, and the humor is as good as it ever was. The anamundisms are still there but easier to ignore than the one about "condominiums". Only one thing hurts and that's the THORisms in 17: 'we doth have business' 'wouldst thou remindeth'. I hope this is Krull's ignorance not yours. Praise Herbie.

Philip Michael Cohen
726 Golf Course Road
Aliquippa, PA. 15001

Yea and verily toil the artists at their labours. Stroke upon stroke and jest upon jest, seeking always their reward in the epistles from the boonies. And what does he find on the back of such feeble postal cards as this? "Anamundims" and "Thorisms". A dictionary! A dictionary! My aardvark for a dictionary!

• • • •

Dear editor (you do edit your own stuff don't you, Dave?)

Whenever I read an issue of Cerebus for the first time (and, yes, many issues are well worth more than one reading) I find myself scrutinizing the major new characters to see if they are based on already-existing characters, real or imagined. So you can imagine my feelings when I saw the cover of 17 (can't you?). There, staring grimly out from his dominant position on the cover was an imposing character who looked not unlike a certain popular four-colour barbarian who is also popular in his paperback book form and apparently due for a "major motion picture" ... need I go on? Is this possible, I asked myself. It would seem almost too direct a parody for this mag, given its basic nature. Having read the story, I'm not so sure that my first feelings were correct. However, Krull is nauseatingly competent and vicious just like you-know-who, so I'm still wondering. What's the verdict? Did I jump the gun?

Another character, Gudre, was more obviously derivative — from the lovable SGT. SCHULTZ of Hogan's Heroes, but Stromm seemed too nondescript to me to have any definite origins of this type. The story itself? Well, I was almost too wrapped up in the generation of characters to notice, but what I did manage to take in seemed to me to be the funniest stuff in several issues. There was also an edge of drama to it since Krull truly is a formidable opponent and one wonders if Cerebus will be able to handle him (or rather, I guess, how Cerebus will be able to handle him). One sour note was that in the last panel Lord Julius refers to a "two-part story" thus intimating to us his awareness of his fictional nature! Let's have no more of this. This mag works only because the characters take their ludicrous selves seriously.

Now that you're monthly, will the target of 156 issues mentioned several issues ago be upped to 312 or whatever? (Let's hope so).

"T.M. Maple"
Toronto, Ontario

*"Nauseatingly competent and vicious" sums it up, all right. You missed guessing the identity because you didn't watch the gradual transformation take place. Krull started off as "Kragg" who was intended to be a parody of the Colonel Flagg of the CIA character from M*A*S*H. Try the voice out and see if it fits. As to your speculation on the number of issues, I still plan to do the book for twenty-six years (as I mentioned in that issue). The first two years, Cerebus was bi-monthly — 12 issues. Twenty four more years of monthly issues — 288 issues. The last issue will be issue 300. Did you ever get the feeling you were sharing the pilot's seat with someone else?*

• • •

Dear Dave & Deni —

I just finished reading 13, 14 & the TBG sequence. 15 is on the shelf and I'll read it soon. I've gotten all of the Cerebus to date except episode 8 of the TBG story.

The art continues to improve with each issue. I was going to suggest reprinting 4 a page at a time in TBG if you don't have time to do more "Sunday" pages now that you're going monthly — but the art isn't really up to your present standards.

The stories, in general, are each as funny or funnier than the one before — except 14 which was a let-down to me. (I guess Groucho never got to me ...)

Now it can be told (I suppose I could have told you last December, but I'm circumspect.) I was trying to convince the Deleware Valley Comic Consortium boys to do a single character con as we did with Sonja and Howard the Duck, and the character was to be (ta, ta-ta) Cerebus!

Unfortunately after three losing conventions in a row (Howard the Duck, Women in Comics, Christmas Con) the boys decided not to do a con in 1980 at all. Judging by the economic conditions this year, they are probably right.

I wanted you and Cerebus as the feature because of the interesting qualities of Cerebus which should get good pre-con publicity and because I knew that you would co-operate 100% ahead of the con to make it succeed.

By the way, publicity did fail

AARDVARK COMMENT

- KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W6

on Christmas Con — How often did I hear, "Oh, you had a con in December?"

Howard Leroy Davis,
38 Simpson Avenue,
Pitman, N.J. 08071

Deni and I were guests at Howard's home the night before the Philadelphia Christmas Con. Coincidentally enough, that was where I finally figured out who would be the ideal ruler for Palnu. I guess Howard's lack of enthusiasm for Groucho blows my chance at having a brass plaque commemorating the event installed on his mantelpiece. Seriously, if anyone else is interested in risking untold thousands of dollars on a Cerebus con, do let me know (especially if you want to have it in California or Miami in February)

• • •

Dear Deni:

I'm impressed by your covers to 16 & 17. They are nowhere near my favourites of your covers, but they certainly do stand out and attract the eye, which is what a good cover should do. Keep up the effort to present artistic variety.

I generally prefer in-depth stories that run for several issues to single-issue stories, unless the latter are exceptionally clever — and on a monthly schedule, you can't win all the time. On the other hand, I do like adventures to come to a distinct conclusion every so often — stories that run over six issues tend to become tedious to me. I don't especially care for "realistic" scripting in which the episodes all segue imperceptibly from one to the next.

Charles Garofalo's comments in the letter column of 16 are interesting if only for their implication that Cerebus is not the first aardvark to visit this planet/dimension/whatever. There must've been at least one earlier one to serve as the model for the aardvark god. Maybe there's some kind of psychic mutation in an infinitesmal portion of the population of an aardvark-dimension that matures around their 26th birthday and inadvertently teleports them to our world.

Fred Patten

That would certainly explain our spare bedroom being wall-to-wall 26 year old aardvarks anyway. If they weren't so cranky, I'd insist that they move their dimensional doorway somewhere else. Fred also reports that he has gotten all of one subscription to the Cerebus newsletter. Contributions and subscriptions ($2.00 for four issues) can be sent to him at the address above.

• • •

Dear Dave and Deni:

I thought that earth-pig aficionados everywhere — especially those engaged in the theological end of Cerebus studies, might be interested in the enclosed article, of which the most aardvarkian passages have been marked.

Keep up the great work!

Sincerely,
Jeff Fruen
1496 Raymond Avenue,
St. Paul, Mn. 55108

Jeff sent along news clippings from the ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS recounting the battle which is looming over the aardvark between Eugene McCarthy ("I lost in '76) and John Anderson ("I'm going to lose in '80") It seems that Anderson is adopting the aardvark as his campaign symbol for November. And to quote one of Anderson's tireless little gofers the aardvark idea was "just something that spewed out of Anderson's mouth one day." This prompted McCarthy to protest in the Washington Post and New Republic magazine "the violation of the privacy of the aardvark." McCarthy feels somewhat paternalistic towards the aardvark since he called his book of poems released in 1970 "Other Things and the Aardvark." McCarthy claims that he wrote the poem hoping people would read it and lose interest in the earth-pig so his privacy would be protected. In addition (and I'm going to straight quotes here, because I find it hard to believe myself), McCarthy was quoted as saying, "The interesting thing about the aardvark is that it didn't evolve from anything and it's not evolving into anything. It's kind of an absolute animal. You can say the aardvark is like any other animal, but you can't say any other animal is like the aardvark. Because if it's like an aardvark, it is an aardvark. The same is true of God. You can say that God is like anything at all, but you can't reverse it. Because if you do, it has to be God. This is a heavy metaphor, the aardvark."

Thank you, Eugene McCarthy. Coming in future issues, Aardvarks in Dealy Plaza by Mark Lane, Beachhead Aardvark by John Foster Dulles and much, much more.

• • •

NOTES

I'd like to say a special thank you to Wendy Pini this time around. Y'see, I have had the idea in my head for Cerebus 20 since I started drawing 18. It's going to be a different kind of issue (unless I chicken out at the last minute) — and I was worried about that. Intellectually, I understand that the readers of Cerebus don't mind if I do an occasional issue that isn't quite the same in format and style. Viscerally, I have one eye out the window watching for the line of villagers' torches winding up the mountain passes.

And then Deni and I got "The Dreamberry Tales", issue 7 of ELFQUEST. The whole story took place (for the most part) in a small cottage with everyone getting drunker by the minute and was chock-a-block with silly jokes, mugging, sight gags.

No fight scene (not really), no heroism unparalleled, no pageantry.

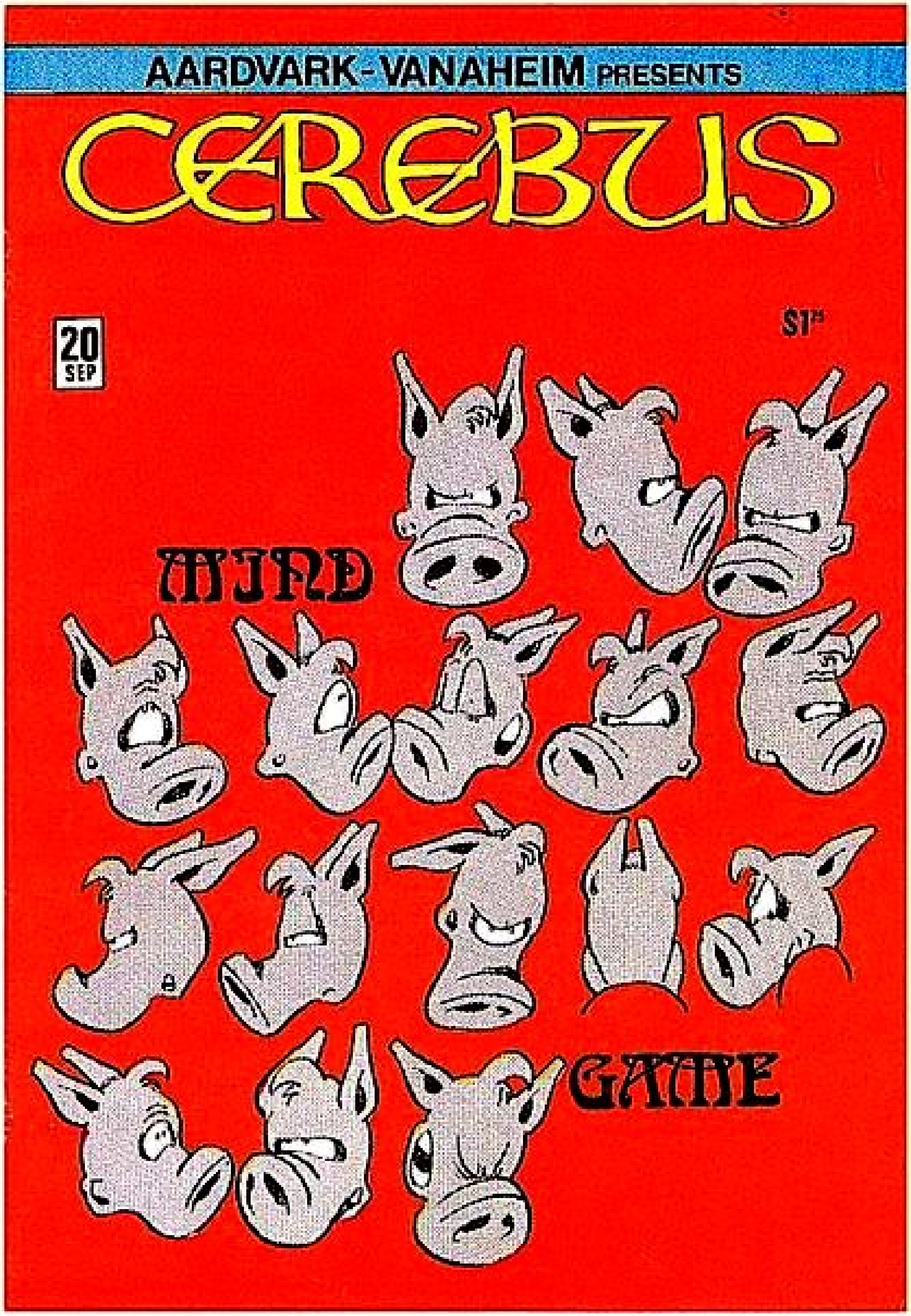
Attagirl, Wendy.

Next issue is my turn.

After that, my plans are a little fuzzy. I have a pretty good — I say, I have a pretty good idea of what's happening in issue 21, too (stand up, son, you're fallin' all over yourself!) Having decided to make the T'gitans assault on Palnu as realistic as possible, I've got a few more issues before we actually see what happens on the battlefield. I will be trying to give each issue a distinctive plot, however, beginning and ending in the twenty pages. For example, with this issue, if you don't like continued stories, just ignore pages 1, 2 and 20. Voila, self-contained unit. (Oh look Deni — here comes the villagers again)

I could go on for hours, but you're falling asleep already and I still have to correct the spelling mistakes in this issue and separate the cover. Anyway, next issue is "Mind Game" and you can be watching for it around the middle of September.

Bye.


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
20
SEP
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MIND
GAME

CEREBUS

A Note from the Publisher

Issue 20 seems to me to be a landmark issue. Dave had been hinting for several months about this issue, so I knew that it would be special in some way. I had never, though, anticipated this!! To me it's the most enjoyable issue to date — although I am aware that I say that often enough on this page.

Not much has happened with Dave and I between the last issue and this one, so I haven't much to report on. I did hear that we were missed at Atlanta (I really shouldn't promise people a year in advance that we would be back. So much can happen in a year). So I would like to tell those of you who were hoping we'd make it that we missed you too, and a regret that with a monthly schedule these things do happen. I am hoping that in the future we will be able to organize things better so that we have the time to do these kinds of things.

The stuffed toys, as you will see, are being produced again. Please note that the address differs from ours and we are not producing them ourselves. I'd also like to thank everyone who had to wait so long for their CEREBUS. Your patience with me was wonderful. (You also now know why I had to find someone else to do them) Sheila is an ardent aardvark-supporter, so I hope you will enjoy these as much as she does making them!

That's about it for this issue ... see you all next month.

Deni

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"Mind Game"

CEREBUS No. 20 (September 1980)

Despite the fact that we printed a letter a while back which featured a sketch of issue No. 20's little secret, I still meet an astonishing number of Cerebus fans who don't know that the issue assembles into a giant picture of Cerebus. The idea was inspired by Neal Adams' "hidden head" trick which (so far as I know) he only did twice; once on a BEN CASEY Sunday page and once in a Deadman story in STRANGE ADVENTURES. The principle of the idea was that you draw a giant head-shot close-up of the character, then draw the panels so that unrelated background and foreground elements make up the giant head. It's an exercise in the thinking side of drawing, since the initial layout has to be conformed to, and the composing elements must retain enough individual identity to still communicate the scene in each individual panel.

The very idea that someone who is basically just employed to communicate story elements in sequential pictures would walk that extra mile for the sake of artistic integrity impresses the hell out of me.

It also induces great guilt, which should not be discounted out of hand as a motivating factor.

Here I am, freed of all artistic constraints, my income being directly tied to the sales of the book I draw, and I haven't come up with a single idea like the "hidden-head page". That was when I decided to take it a step further and do a hidden full figure, life-size of Cerebus.

I started picturing how I would do it and announced one day that everyone was to be banned from the studio. I got several enormous sheets of newsprint and taped them up on the wall, cutting them so they measured 50" by 60". I then drew the largest picture of Cerebus I had ever done before or since. I inked it very quickly with a thick marker and then cut it, the whole picture into twenty individual pages each the standard 10" by 15" size.

I tried writing the story with the layouts close at hand, but soon gave up trying to predetermine how the pages would flow and decided to improvise day-by-day, the first time I had done so since the very early issues.

It was with a great deal of fear that I showed Deni the first five pages. I mean, I didn't want the trick to be OBVIOUS. And after you've been filling in a story around giant aardvark parts for a week, you tend to become convinced that all your best efforts to hide what they are have fallen very flat, indeed.

She didn't figure it out, though and it wasn't until two weeks after the issue came out that I heard about the first fan to figure it out. (Harry Kremer told me)

Anyway, Cerebus' mental acrobatics seemed like the best way to kick off the endless complications and intrigues to come. The Illusionists versus the Cirimists in Togith. Pictures within pictures illustrating the stories within the story.

The title "Mind Game" was freely swiped from John Lennon's "Mind Games" and is respectfully dedicated to his memory.

This is a blank page. It appears here for the second time.

the aardvarkian age

- by Michael Loubert

Last issue saw an excerpt from Lord Po's "The Book of Twenty-three." The following, also an excerpt from Po's book, recounts his exodus from Togith.

The barbarous Dagithans had stormed Togith city, slipping in during a rain storm. Commanding an ad-hoc collection of young fire-eating nobles, Lord Po escaped amidst the sack. Shortly, they became aware of a large band of cavalry pursuing them.....

I checked column order again. Good, they were learning some march discipline. Not enough to save us from a really bad string of luck, but then they hadn't the time to learn. At least those riders back there weren't Hsi-fans. If they were we would have been all dead men by then.

My head didn't feel too clear, but this was no time for hemp. The good stuff was in the saddle-bags, but that was for an emergency.

I flung a glance back over my shoulder. Tion was still there, keeping an eye for stragglers. "Hey, Tion! Up front!" I remember chewing my lip, a gesture reserved for desperate situations.

Tion grunted. Not a man for words, Tion.

"Ah, you're here. Good lad. Tell me, what are our chances for survival?"

Tion rode for a bit, silent. Then he shook his head.

"Care to elaborate?" I enquired.

He grimaced. "They are northmen. No good ducking into woods." Another pregnant pause. "To Palnu, maybe. Doubt we'd make it."

I sighed heavily. "This calls for emergency measures!"

Tion grunted and spat, clearly disliking the theatrics.

I ignored him. Instead, I raised a war-horn to my lips and blew "Halt". Luckily, most the young aristos remembered what it meant.

At this point Lord Po digresses considerably. There are several pages describing the Togithan countryside, and the means of preparing "bennaf", an Amstanatic-pharmaceutical. Its effects seem to be a cross between analgesic and euphoric. Finally, a maneuvre is attempted, involving a stream and back-tracking through a section of woodlot. It fails, but buys Po's little blue-blood band some time.

We awaited them at the edge of the woodlot. I had administered the bennaf but it had not taken effect yet.

I was nervous. I am always nervous before a fight, before the chemicals take over. Bennaf is good for that. I do not particularly like fighting - I can think of a million things much more worth-while - but sometimes folk just won't have it any other way.

We were not poorly equipped, being rich young men of a merchant principality. I carried a twelve-foot, iron-shod lance, called a 'cillach', for the charge, wielded with both hands. My scimitar CUWRIGD was for the melee; a good 'treaguson' of mesh and plate I wore for protection. We had all the optimism in the world, all twenty-three of us.

I heard a grunt, which bellowed out into an animal roar. Was it Tion? I was not sure, for my head felt light all of a sudden. I found myself grinning. I shook my head. The world was in sharp focus.

A glance at my troop, and my grin broadened. They were restless, shifting their weight in the saddle, shaking the 'cillach'. Tion was growling, but the rest were mostly quiet.

"Lord Po! The Dagithans! They approach!" Young Wef of Cerphinlor waved his cillach over his head ponderously.

And, by Dog, there they were. Somewhere in the back of my head a tiny voice said, "about a full strength Vanea, maybe a hundred souls all told," but the rest of my brain was playing this swelling music I could not quite place.

No matter. I blew the "advance" and urged my horse forward. Then I took a good grip on the cillach and swung it down, partially couched under my right arm.

I felt very good. I wanted to break into a full gallop, but that would wind the horses. The sun seemed very bright, I could even smell the grass. We advanced in a ragged line, some muttering, some shouting. I bellowed a command, and we broke into a canter.

I could see them clearly, not so far away now. Dagithans, uncivilized. They were already disordered, dismayed by our steady advance. The music muttered away, stored in some hide-away in my brain. Wish I knew what it was.

We were almost there! We flattened out into a gallop, Tion roaring, Wef singing. I was shouting some nonsense in Gaelic. We surged forward. We were invincible! We would smash them down!

A Dagithan loomed before me, mounted on a huge farm horse. He was screaming something, waving his short spear around. I caught him in the midriff, and off he flew. The cillach snapped in half, and I flung aside the ferrule. Some hairy barbarian trotted up to me on a pony, flung a javelin. I dodged, swept out CUWRIGD and slew him.

We stayed close together, as much we could. Generally, our weight of armour and horse was heavier, and the bennaf clouded our wounds and fatigue without slowing reaction. We cut our way through, and re-grouped at horn-call.

There were seventeen of us left. Wef was not there.

I think we might have taken two or three barbarians for every one of our dead. Maybe eighty left?

"Tall odds," I recall Tion remarking.

"They are barbarians. They have no stomach for prolonged killing." I raised my voice, so all could hear. "Take your time to kill more! They fight for loot, our need is greater. We kill out of boredom!"

We cheered, closed ranks and charged them again. This time they broke, as I knew they would. They did not expect us to fight back. They were after a hunt.

Now they were the hunted. They broke, and we took our time killing them. I think Tion slew their chief. They broke, and they ran all the way to Togith city.

We re-grouped again, this time alone on that bloody field. The bennaf wore off that night, and a man died from his wounds. It was a bleary, tired dozen men that began the trek south to Palnu, in the early dawn hours.

As for myself, I lit up a pipe-full (it was about time) and began to think deep thoughts. There were possibilities in Parmoc.

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AARDVARK COMMENT

- KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W6

Dear Friends:

Every last one of you must have known in your heart of hearts that we were only going to have a one page letter column this issue. You managed to restrain your typewriters admirably. In point of fact, you all did such a good job of not writing to us this issue that we almost didn't have enough to fill one page.

But next issue there is some GOOD NEWS.

We're going to have two pages of letters again.

I know you're all just as excited as you can be now that you've heard this, so why don't you all just plunk yourselves down with a clean piece of white paper and write a nice letter about anything having to do with Cerebus. Dumb questions, smart remarks, moronic puns, outright ass-kissing: we'll print it all.

Remember the address is AARDVARK COMMENT. Sorry, I fell asleep, Dave, but it won't happen again. Kitchener, Ontario.

I want a ratio of fan mail to bills of at least 3:1.

Dave Sim, perpetrator
CEREBUS THE AARDVARK

Dear Dave and Deni:

I imagine that you often get letters written with the standard quote "I've never written to a comic book before, but..." Well this is another one of those. I adore your little gray critter. He's great. Even my wife enjoys him. You guys have filled my day, because I spent it sending money for the newsletter, Nucleus 1 and Black Zeppelin 1. I'm hooked. Next comes the T-shirt. Not only am I hooked but also, I am impressed by your folksy attitude and the stand you have taken by being committed to keeping Cerebus coming.

I'm sure that it would probably have been a lot easier to give up Cerebus and the headaches that have come through trying to deal with distribution, bounced checks and broken promises, but you've hung in there and you can be proud of that.

You have my encouragement and support for your efforts. Additionally, my support means that I have subscribed to Cerebus. You at one time told us fans to support our comix shop. Well, he's doing real well and I feel a subscription will cancel distribution delays and give you some upfront cash. I know that it's no fun to bite the bullet about cash flow all the time.

Anyway, thanks a lot for increasing the quality of my life (pretty heady stuff ... ehh).

Give the Earth-Pig a pat on the head for me (if it's safe) and take care.

Randy Linder
3912 Dover
St. Louis, Mo. 63116

A pat on the head?! Are you kidding? If I wasn't the one who draws him, he wouldn't let me sit in the same room.

As to your comments on subscription vs. comic shop. We very much sympathize with your position and we are trying to find ways from our end to improve the flow of books from here to Brooklyn and on to the local shops. It takes ten days to print Cerebus and another week for the trucks to carry them right to the door of Sea-Gate distributors. Your best bet if you run a comic shop and want to get Cerebus on a regular basis is to call Phil Seuling or Jonni Levas at Sea-Gate and arrange for a standing order to be shipped every month. That's Good Old Uncle Phil or Newlywed Aunt Jonni at (212) 232-4956. No collect calls, unless you live in Queens.

We would appreciate hearing from any comic shops having distribution problems with CEREBUS. We'll iron out as much as we can from this end.

• • •

Dear Dave and Deni:

I just finished Cerebus 19 and I had to write. I could see no other alternative. This had to be the best ish in recent memory. To be quite honest, the Palnu series was starting to drag a little, and a brief respite was in order. Don't get me wrong, I think Lord Julius is a great character, but he is also the longest running supporting character the mag has and I'm just not prepared for that.

What can I say about Henrot's return? It was excellent. Where did he get the Gerbies (!)? I know what he means about concentration; my first apprentice took up residence in a small petre dish. The squeaking is driving me nuts.

Seriously, though, the humor was back to expected standards. Page 12, panel 6 is a classic. The look of triumph and satisfaction on our aardvark's face was hysterical. The Gerbies (anyone we know?) really know how to frustrate one, don't they? Reminds me of MYcat.

Dave, I am amazed at the quality product you manage to put out on a monthly basis. Whereas a step-up in production would normally mean a drop in quality, you've actually improved. I hope this isn't a strain on you (the work, not this letter), because I'd rather see the book go bi-monthly than you have to forsake quality for quantity.

Anyway, I'm looking forward to 20 and who, I say who is gonna be guesting in 21? (straighten up and look at me when I'm talking at ya, boy.)

Jon "Starvin" Marvin
1230 Radom St. Unit 14
Pickering, Ontario L1W 3B8

Listen, son, how would it be if I was to go around giving away every dad-blasted thing that's going to happen in the book? Why inside o' six months I wouldn't be able to sell a copy of Cerebus if my life depended on it. I'd be washed up — finished, that is.

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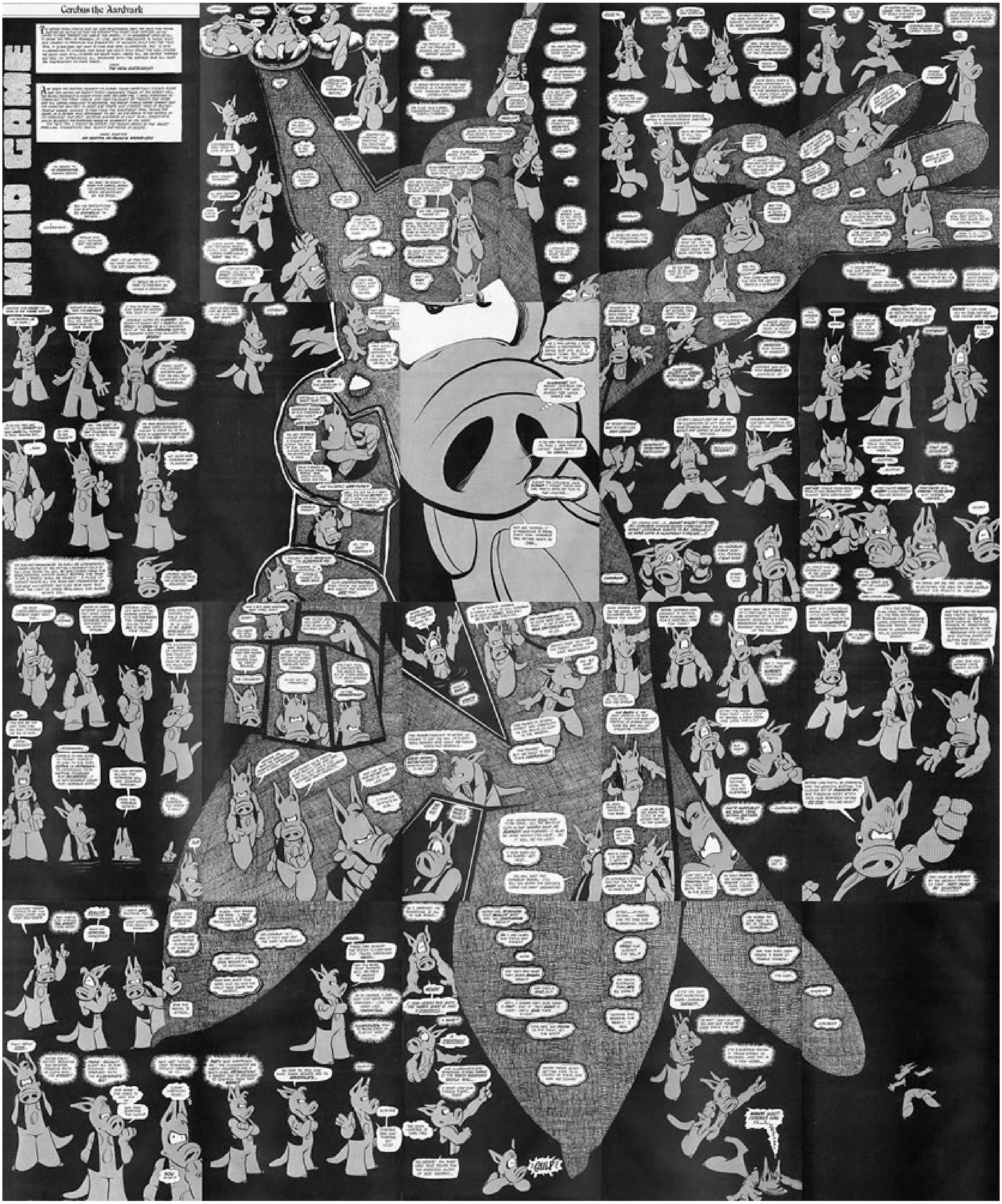
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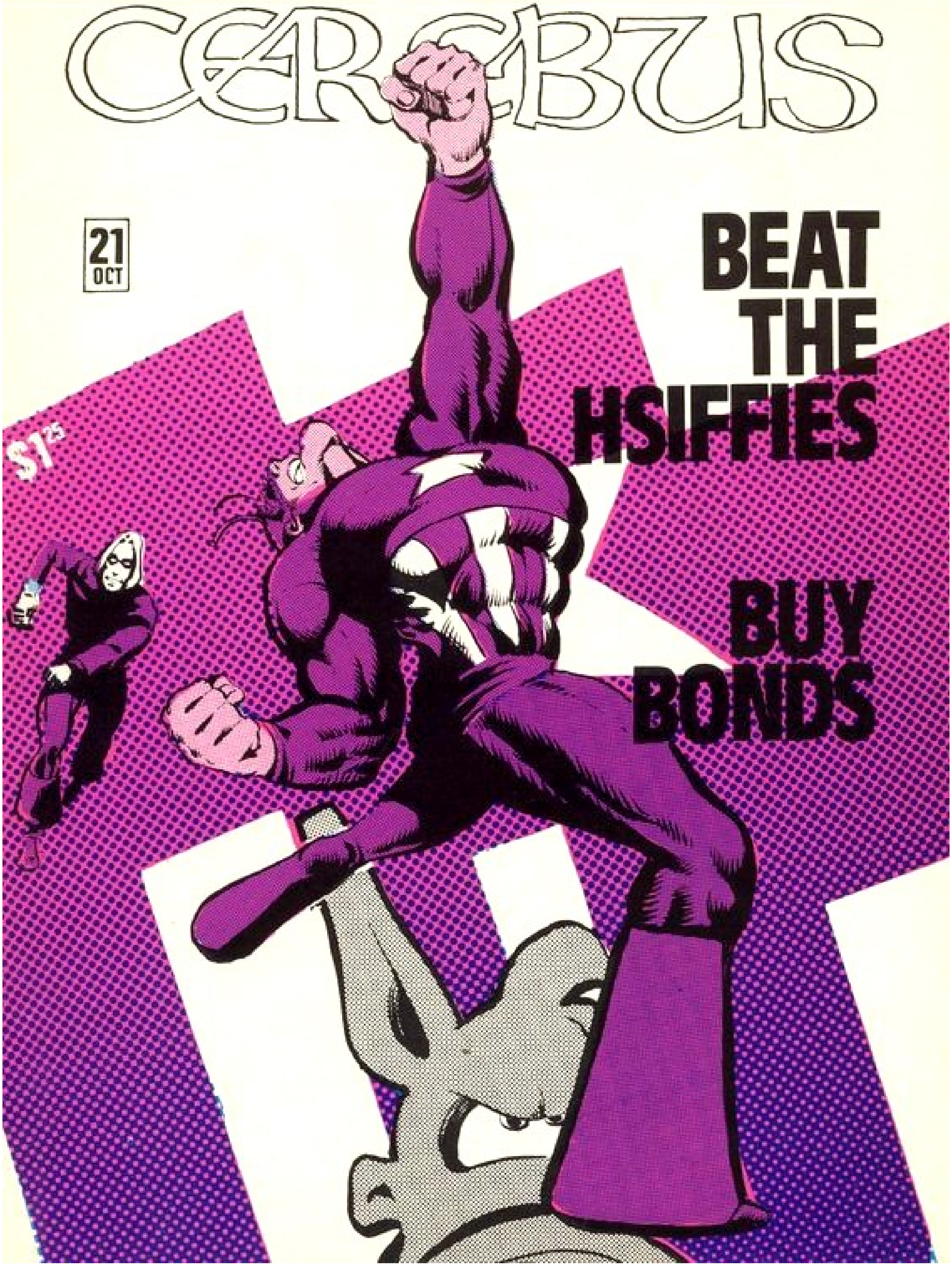

CEREBUS

A Note from the Publisher

By the time this is being printed the mail strike here in Canada should be well under way. For those of you who subscribe through Now and Then Books, you may be getting this a bit later than usual, but there is little anyone can do about it.

You will probably notice that there is no Aardvarkian Age in this issue. Michael is in the process of re-evaluating it and it may be decided to have it appear in the newsletter instead of here. In any event, Michael has done a story for the newsletter and when this mail strike is over I will send out something as well as whatever Dave is putting in it.

So far, Fred Patten has mainly received artwork and very little in the way of written contributions. I hope that I will hear differently from him in the next letter. If you haven't yet sent in your contributions or written for a subscription, what's holding you?! The address is: Fred Patten, 11863 West Jefferson Blvd., Culver City, California, 90230. The subscription is $2.00 for one year (4 issues). If you had written to me asking about the newsletter I would suggest that you write to Fred. I don't trust the mails much here in Canada, or how complete my list is.

I was talking to Phil Seuling lately and he told me that interest in the Swords of Cerebus book is high. I regret it is taking so long to produce it, but now Marshall Rogers' pencils are stuck in the mail, somewhere between New York and here. I don't know when we will see them. Today is Wednesday and their official strike begins next Monday. The unofficial one just ended so the backlog is terrific!! But once we get those pencils, we will be just about done as the cover is nearly finished. With any luck (ha!) it should be out after 22. We hope!!

If David Miley of New York should read this, I sent you your aardvark and it was returned to me just before the strike began. If you can be reached somewhere else, could you let me know?

As I had **minor** surgery (yes, I'm fine) this month I haven't followed the production of the story but was able to read it in one lump instead of the usual page-a-day. I was surprised how much I enjoyed it. (I gotta do this more often!) So please do go ahead and begin it. God, it's funny!!!

Deni

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published monthly by Aardvark-Vanaheim Press, 221 Queen St. S. No. 1401, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents©1980 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 No. 21, October 1980.

"CAPTAIN COCKROACH

CEREBUS No. 21 (October, 1980)

and

"THE DEATH OF ELROD"

CEREBUS No. 22 (November, 1980)

Well, to start off with, I really have no idea why issue 21 is so hard to find anywhere. It has become a common occurance at conventions to have someone come staggering up, grab me by the lapels, thrust their face to within an inch of my own and growl, "You **kept** them all, **didn't** you? Admit it!".

To the best of my recollection, this may have been one of those time periods when we decided that we could no longer afford to print more copies of an issue than were ordered by the distributors (or, in this case, distributor; we were selling exclusively to the late Phil Seuling's Sea Gate Distributors). I remember that they were hard to find around the office within a few weeks, anyway. That's usually a sure sign that we have a scarce one on our hands.

This forty page story features the first appearance of President Weisshaupt, a character I know none of you would want to invite for dinner. He's quite a bit different on his first outing than he is in his more recent appearances. More on that in a few paragraphs.

Having finished the Palnu storyline a few issues before and having moved towards the development of a major war in issues 17, 18, 19 and 20, I was feeling the urge to do something — well — structural with the story. I had been developing the idea, albeit gradually, since issue 5 that Cerebus existed as an unwitting, but key, figure in a number of wide-ranging conspiricies and as a nexus point for a number of disparate belief systems. I mean he was also the self-centred, hot-tempered, loathesome little drunkard he appeared to be on the surface, but he was also something different. A lot of people want to know what he's doing and have invested great sums of money and uncountable manhours trying to find out as much about him as they can. Why? Well, that would be telling, wouldn't it?

Anyway, I was interested in pointing this out, and having him drugged by Perce (19) wasn't quite as drastic as I wanted to go. I was still mulling over a few possible ways to make a really outrageous kind of structural change in the story when I got invited to this stag, see? As it turned out it was Boobah's stag (or rather the chap upon whom the Boobah character is based, but more on this another time. If I start talking about Boobah, this introduction will run much too long and I'll probably get hungry). When I got there, I bought a dozen beer tickets. Then I went out back for some not-so-fresh-air. Then I watched this short movie about some nuns who attack this man in a graveyard (I thought it lacked conviction).

And then the strangest thing happened.

This guy I had never met before must have known I had a headache, because he offered me an aspirin. It was a tiny purple aspirin. It was a very, very good aspirin though. I could tell, because the guy wanted four dollars for it (Canadian funds but still). I had used up a few of my beer tickets by this point, and I ventured the opinion that in about an hour I would probably know how good the aspirin was. The guy who sold it to me said it wouldn't take that long.

The next thing I saw was the ceiling of my bedroom. I felt pretty good, considering.

My next insight was that I didn't remember coming home. Deni told me that the police brought me home. She also looked at me as if she didn't quite believe I could have forgotten something so . . . out-of-the-ordinary. To this day, I have pieced together very little of what happened that night. Just as well, I suppose.

But it gave me a wonderful idea for the massive structural change in the storyline. I dropped Cerebus several hundred miles northeast of where he had been drugged. Just like real life, I had decided to leave him in the dark about what had happened while he was unconscious. It was one of those decisions that unleashes the hounds of fannish retribution (a not altogether infrequent occurence when you plot a three hundred issue storyline, I've found). I was accused of abandoning a storyline because I was bored, because I couldn't figure out an ending, because I was burnt out, because I had hit a writer's block.

Tut, tut.

(Most fans hate it when you say tut, tut, actually, but that's just the kind of guy I am, I guess).

There was a great deal of suspicion about President Weisshaupt's assertion that the T'Gitans had been massacred. I suppose it's a natural reaction to have when I pull the rug out from under you with a radical transition, but, you can believe the President on this one, kids. T'Gitans go bye-bye. Have I ever lied to you before?

I mean about anything **important**.

As for Weisshaupt himself, I had decided with these two issues to do a parody of Captain America, patriotism, xenophobia, revolution, literacy, "publish or perish", Bucky Barnes (Captain America's sidekick), Deadman, the "can-do" presidency (a la FDR and JFK), the aristocracy and mass appeal. Central to this story-line would be the most aristocratic, unorthodox, indefatigable obnoxiously self-confident and creatively schizophrenic individual in all of the Feldwar Valley.

As long as we're on the topic of my relentless quest to piss all of you, extremely, off, more than one fan has criticized the fact that Weisshaupt escapes his fate at the end of issue 22 and reappears some thirty issues hence with his plan for the United Feldwar States intact and nearing fruition (something of a mixed metaphor, but you get the idea). I even asserted something to that effect in an answer to a letter in Aardvark Comment when someone asked if Weisshaupt would be coming back and I replied that he would undoubtedly end up on the gallows for crimes against Lower Felda's military tribunal.

It was one of those times when I tried to move the storyline in a direction it wouldn't follow. Why? Because Weisshaupt is too smooth, too self-assured, too aware, . . . too Weisshaupt, to just accept a verdict and start writing his will.

He sold out.

You have to read between the lines to pick up on that, but then Weisshaupt is hardly the type to reappear and announce "Guess what? I abandoned all of my previous convictions and now I'm cooperating with the authorities because I've discovered it's an easier way to get what I want".

Notice how in this storyline he isn't talking about the peasants and livestock? No disparaging of the common people. Quite the contrary. He's using the people against the established order. He's fighting a guerilla war with established banking institutions, adopting a common, grass-roots perception of current events and offering it as an alternative to the present government. Then he got caught.

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

His success in the more recent issues stems from aligning himself with the vanishing aristocracy, the new merchant class (not so new by this point) and, basically, anyone with enough money and influence to help him move things along. And guess which previous allies he had to desert to achieve his goal? No. No hints.

The whole presidential aspect of this storyline, as well as the "Death of Elrod" finish developed when I noticed that the cover of #22 would have a very familiar looking date

CONTINUED IN ISSUE 22

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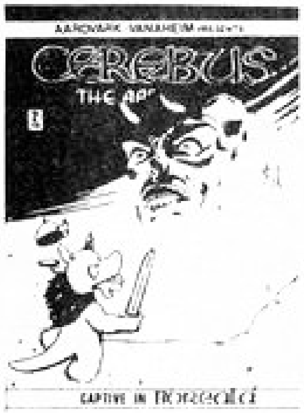
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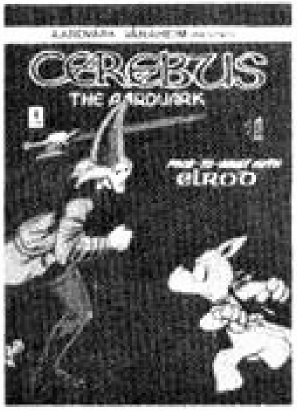
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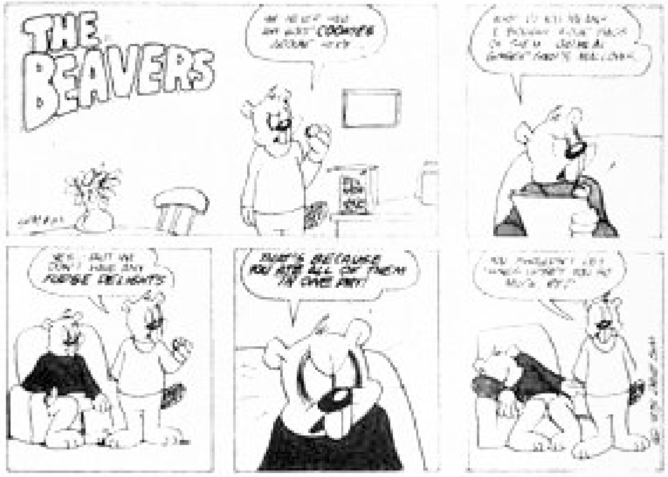
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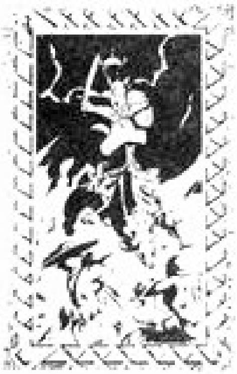

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AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Greetings!

Two days ago my friend, Randy, who is stationed in Colorado, sent me CEREBUS 5-17. My favourite comic is not available near here, so I must find other means of building my library. However, he is willing to aid me in my quest for Cerebus.

I had not read 17 till a few minutes ago, but I was impressed, to say the least. The illustrations have continuously improved over the months and 17 is no exception. After all, I was once a reader of pop superhero comics which had the artwork of preschoolers compared to Dave Sim's work. It's a refreshing change.

But, there are some who say that I am too old to read such books. To that I say, "Bull." If one can't share in the imagination and creativity of others, what is life worth? How can people who don't like science fiction and/or fantasy judge such a thing? When they make comments like those, Cerebus should hack them into fertilizer.

Anyway, keep up the good work, Dave and Deni. I will be looking forward to 18 and beyond.

Bruce S. Howland, AIC, USAF
PSC Box 1953
Mountain Home, Air Force Base, ID
83648

Too old? Are you kidding? Take a look at the next letter, Bruce. If the writer isn't on the shady side of thirty, I'll turn my copies of Savage Sword 2 and 3 into fertilizer.

• • •

Dear Dave,

I absolutely love Cerebus (how do you pronounce that?) and I pray that you never stop making the book. I found out about Cerebus with issue 15 and have since acquired all of the issues except numbers 1-4 and 13,14. I know it is virtually impossible to find issues 1-4 but I would like to know of a place where I may purchase issues 13 and 14 and how much they would cost.

Also I would like to know how much you charge for each page of original artwork. Thank you! And thank you for such an excellent comic book!

John Zeleznik
752 Guinda St.,
Palo Alto, Ca.
94301

I'm starting to think Harry sends all these letters in himself. You can get issues 2 to the present from Now and Then Books, 103 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ontario. Their ad is elsewhere in this issue. Issues 11 to the present are cover price, plus .35 postage.

• • •

Dear Dave and Deni,

Excellent. That is the only word I can use to describe Cerebus. In the six (seven?) years I have collected comics, I have never had a letter published. I hope this isn't one of those times.

Let me begin my criticism (though there isn't much to criticize about) by saying that with every issue the book gets better. Although Cerebus and Howard the Duck, but Cerebus far surpasses Howard, in both art and story.

The only real complaint I have about the book is the covers the color seems to be very lackluster.

Good luck in the future (even though you don't really need it).

James Timlick
382 Madison St.,
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3J 1H8

Thank you for your kind thoughts. The last sentence in paragraph two looks to me like a serious drug problem. I suggest you seek counselling.

• • •

Dear Dave & Deni,

Pray Pardon this hasty note, but I fear that beyond it, I shall never find the time to let you know how much I enjoy Cerebus.

I have been receiving your books in the post and with issue 18 there was included a note asking if I was getting them (This is always a difficult tact to take: "Excuse me, can you hear me? If you can't hear me, knock three times...").

I immediately took to the pleasant task of writing a lengthy letter cum critique ... quite glowing it was. But other urgent matters displaced me after only half an hour, thus I can hear you, but my thrice-knockings are muffled and indistinct.

I must conclude; I am distracted; I shall write again.

P.S. Please never leave Cerebus to make Limited Edition Prints ... or some other such nonsense.

Barry Windsor-Smith
Box 92,
Madison Square Station,
New York, N.Y.

Limited Edition Prints? There's money in those things, is there?

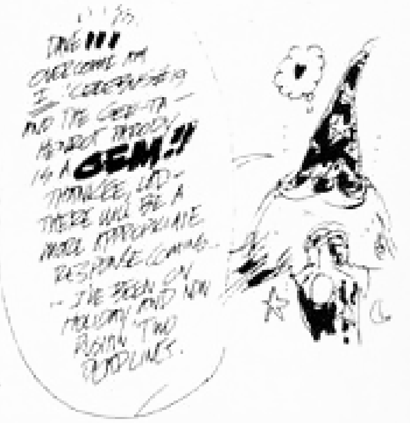
• • •

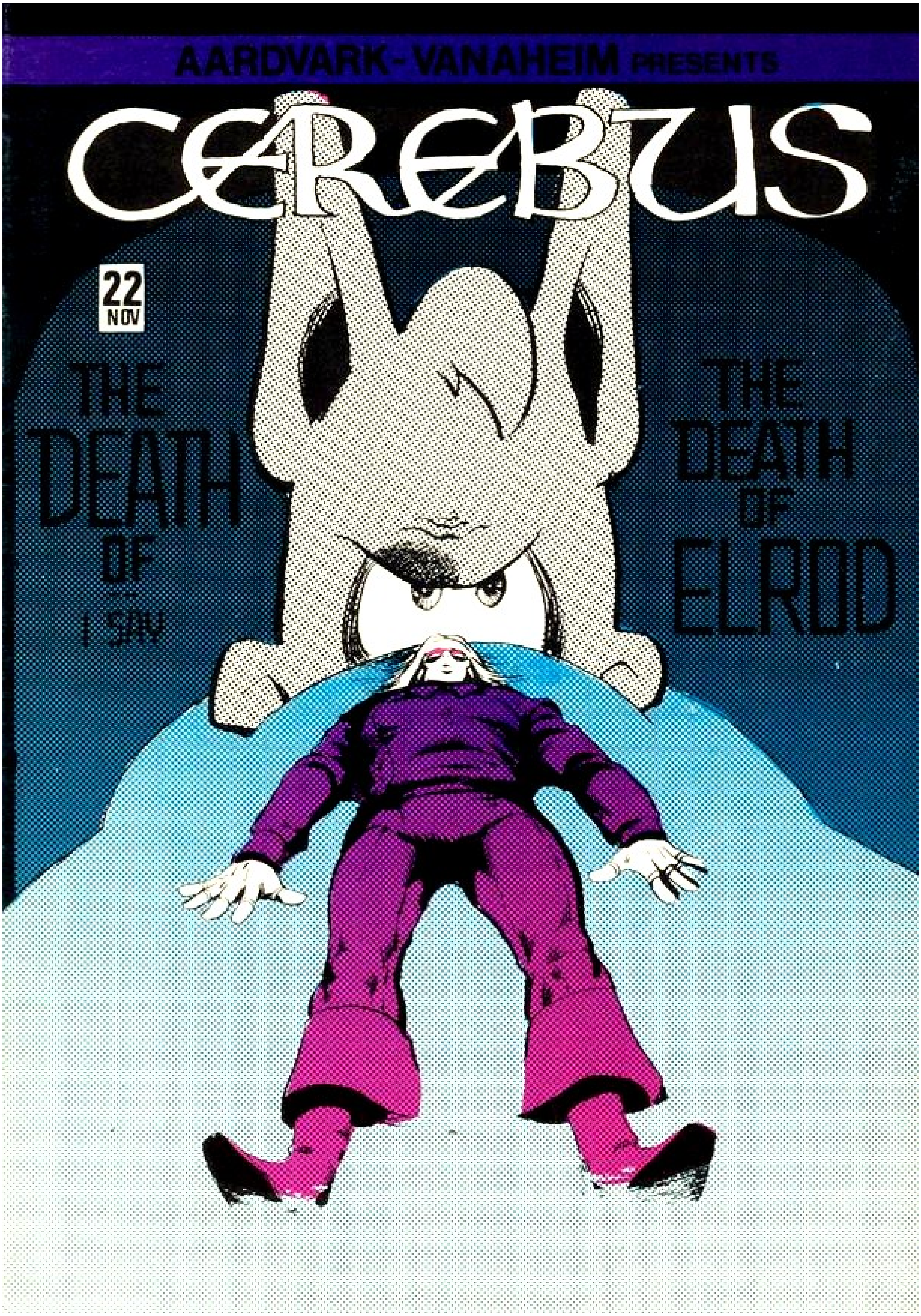
Notes

This issue was composed under somewhat bizarre conditions. The day I was supposed to start writing it, I was at Mosport for a ten-band concert of new wave and punk music (ranging from the Pretenders to Elvis Costello). A week later, I was at the CNE in Toronto watching Queen and Bob Seger on successive nights and still I had nary a thought about issue 21. By the time September 8 rolled around, I had the first five pages written. And that was when I settled down to some serious work. It got progressively more serious as the days skimmed past, until here I am, the day before this absolutely HAS to be at the printers, madly typing whatever comes into my fevered little brain. In short this was one of those issues that is better to have drawn than to be drawing. The major result of doing a book on such an improvisational basis is the way all the outside tasks get put on stand-by. By next issue, I hope to have the format for the newsletter worked out, a cohesive plan for selling the original artwork so no one gets offended, and a package of promotional materials ready to go to a number of comic shops.

But if a good concert comes along, all you'll probably see next issue is next issue.

Dave will be at Creation Con in Rochester on Nov. 22 & 23.




AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
22
NOV
THE DEATH OF I SAY
THE DEATH OF ELROD

CEREBUS

A Note from the Publisher

Well - here I am writing my 22nd last-minute editorial. Dave is gone to Ottawa (**our** nation's capital) for a three-day convention there called MapleCon. Being the true-blue Canadian that I am, I'm writing this while watching a Toronto-Calgary hockey game. Ah - it's so easy to know when winter is approaching.

I have had less to do with this issue than usual, as I have been sick for the last two weeks. (Is this beginning to sound familiar?) Dave has been working really hard this issue, and I must admit I see more of Dave peeking thru Cerebus' personality in this issue than in any previous ones.

I've been hearing a fair number of rumors that Cerebus is hard to find in some places. If you live in a town where this is so, please let us know. By this I mean, let me know the name of the shop and its address. Our distributors have increased their orders - but they can't get them there if no one lets us know where they need them. It's not always easy to know where distribution is and isn't going. I would appreciate all the help you can give.

Being as this issue is the second half of the story that began last issue, I think that I'll just quietly fade away behind my accounts book. I invite you to join Cerebus and his seemingly endless quest for the thing that little aardvarks dreams are made of ... gold!!

Deni

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published monthly by Aardvark-Vanaheim Press, 221 Queen St. S. No. 1401, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2G 1W5. Denise Loubert, publisher. All contents © 1980 Dave Sim. Printed by Fairway Press. Vol. 1 No. 22, Nov. 1980.

SWORDS 22 INTRO, CONTINUED

on it; 22 NOV.

It was quite a juggling act. I remember, having consulted my first notebook used for figuring out the story-line, dialogue, character designs and layouts (before issue 20, I just used scraps of paper and then threw them away when I was done). The first several pages feature a lot of crossed-out dialoque and drawing of the President as FDR, the President as JFK. The point I wanted to get across was that the Captain America-style character steeped in patriotism, thinking with his muscles and xenophobic as a son-of-a-bitch (did you know there was a Captain America story done in 1945 in which CA killed one, count 'em, one million Japanese?) plays right into the hands of a ruthless schemer and opportunist like Weisshaupt. The presidential use of xenophobia as a means of uniting widely-differing factions behind a single leader was central to the story line.

Not to mention the fact that I wanted to be the first person in twenty-five years to put "Buy Bonds" on the cover of a comic book.

The Jimmy Carter/Richard Nixon parodies at the end of the second part seem more than a little contrived in retrospect and I positively winced while re-reading them before writing this introduction. It would have been all worthwhile if I could have used Deshen (he still serves on the military tribunal. Oh, didn't I mention that?) as one of the governors-in-revolt (with Julius and Leonardi) in 62. Unfortunately, I ran out of room in that issue, so you'll just have to wait for his appearance sometime in the next while as Weisshaupt's United Feldwar States become less-so.

The groundwork for Cerebus' extended stay at the Regency and rise to prominence as a political figure is laid in this story-line. Notice on page seven of "The Death of Elrod" that he is filling the air around him with words, while complaining about southlanders who do the same thing? Having Weisshaupt tell him that his T'gitan allies were cut to pieces with ease by Gorce and his troops put a permanent dent in his conviction that a bunch of battle-hardened barbarians would be more than a match for a bunch of pampered city-dwellers and their mercenaries.

I had a wonderful time between issues 21 and 22. So many people were worried that I was really, honest-and-truly and no-two-ways-about-it, going to kill Elrod. I mean I **could** have. No one knew for sure if I would or wouldn't. Reading the end of 21, I can see why they thought that. Nice cliff-hanger. If I do say so myself.

Deadalbino is a parody of a comic book series done in the late sixties by Neal Adams and Arnold Drake. Dig. There's this circus performer and he gets shot on the trapeze (trapeze was his thing) and he dies. Heavy. But then he rises out of his body and walks away. He tries to talk to people to tell them he's okay and he touches somebody and they go, like, stiff, eh? And he takes over their body, like. And he can use them and leave whenever he likes and take somebody else over.

This dude spent something like twelve issues of **Strange Adventure** looking for the guy who killed him. I don't know about the other people who read this book, but for me searching for my killer would have run a distant second to taking over the body of my math teacher who was, like, built like crazy and having her say "excuse me, class" and then like, go to the staff washroom and have her lock herself in a stall and just, like, spend two hours with her hands inside her blouse. y'know?

So anyway, that's where Deadalbino came from.

You might be wondering **why** this would happen to Elrod when he got killed, but that goes back to why everyone is watching Cerebus all the time and wondering what he's up to. So that's for me to know and for you to read about.

I should be getting to it around issue 175.

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Dave

I think CEREBUS is the best comic book published currently. This isn't just another entry in the contest to see who can praise CEREBUS most highly. There isn't any other title that can match CEREBUS for consistently well-written, well-drawn, *original * stories.

I could spend the rest of this letter praising CEREBUS, but I don't think it would interest anybody but you, so ...

Where did you get the name "cerebus" from? From "cerberus" or "cerebral" or a combination of the two? I don't like to criticize CEREBUS, but I have two complaints: First, could you please not end every sentence with three dots, like so: "...". It gets somewhat irritating after a while.

Second, the coloring of your covers is very unappealing in some cases. When you mix black dots with color dots, the result is often a moire pattern that is very unpleasant to look at. However, the quality of the covers is constantly improving. Please take the black tone pattern out of the words "cerebus" on the cover.

I hope your circulation rises, so you can consider publishing CEREBUS weekly! Speaking of weekly things, what happened to the CEREBUS strip in TBG?

When will the reprint of CEREBUS 1-4 appear? How about doing another CEREBUS poster? How about sending a drawing to everyone who sends you a letter (heh, heh)?

I'd like to end this letter with another compliment, but I think my first paragraph would outdo anything else I could say.

Brent Iverson
4131 Frst Markley
1425 Washington Heights
Ann Arbor, Mi.
48104

Deni mis-spelled Cerebus as the name of her science fiction and fantasy fanzine before I arrived on the scene and the mis-spelling stuck. I was the one who decided that the name referred to A-V's mascot aardvark. I tried ending every sentence with three exclamation marks, but it looked too much like a Marvel comic. I am doing everything in my power to keep moires off of the covēr — maybe I'll be perfect next week? (note from Deni ... I have to come to Dave's defense here. Moires are caused because the angle of the screens to differentiate the four colours in the cover have to be at certain ***exact*** *angles. If they are off by only a few degrees, the result is a moire. So, you see, it's no easy thing to do by eye.) The weekly Cerebus strip was a casualty of the monthly schedule I introduced a couple of months after deciding to do it. The reprint of 1-4 will be out as soon as all the material is completed (another casualty of the monthly schedule). If I sent a drawing to everyone who sent in a letter,* ***I'd*** *become a casualty of the monthly schedule.*

Do write again the next time you want to play twenty questions.

• • •

Dear Aardvarkians,

Just a quick note to let you know how much I've enjoyed (enjoy is such a timid word. I need something weightier but my Roget's is across the room) Cerebus. I discovered him, and you, in a comic shop here in State College and am puzzled beyond belief that there isn't more written about your achievement. I believe that I will write Mediascene and The Comic's Journal and hustle them along.

After years of reading rather trite, bland fare and ignoring undergrounds, I am pleased to find that someone has found a happy compromise between the two.

Punchem in the head and may your circulation never falter. I'm gonna pass the news about Cerebus to anyone I know who enjoys good art, great fantasy, and whole-hearted belly laughs. Who cares if my friends think I'm strange for loving an aardvark?

P.S. I'd be very interested in a Cerebus poster if you'd list the price of the damned thing!

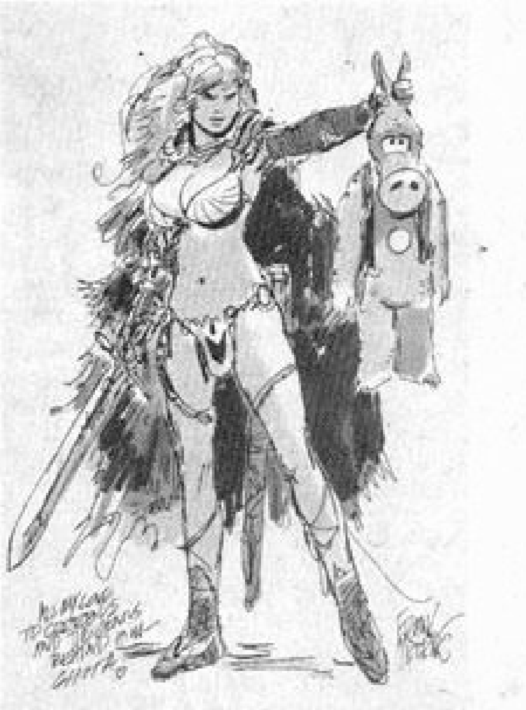
Jeff Lang
Nittang 23, Rm. 3
State College, PA
16802

The price of the first Cerebus the Aardvark poster is now an intregal part of the Now and Then Books' ad facing this letters page. Still more evidence that Harry writes all these letters himself and travels around North America mailing them.

• • •

Dear Dave and Deni

I'm a new convert to the Aardvarkian ranks — only picked up my first issue of Cerebus (17) about two months ago. I've really been struck by the little guy, though (no blood yet!). I have been picking up back issues, so I now have 10 of the first 20 issues. Until I read 20, I thought I could (relatively speaking) know what to expect. But number 20 sure was different!!! Also a lot of fun.



AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Cerebus 20 had a multitude of funny expressions on our hero. I never knew aardvarks had such expressive faces. Deni, I believe you said in one of your introductory notes that everyone likes something different in Cerebus. What usually makes me laugh the most are the little guy's ears pointing or his eyes. Like I said, very expressive. Dave, you must get some chuckles out of his features too, or you wouldn't go for a cover like this one. A really nice change of pace.

Also, since I'm new to the book, I can more readily see the evolution of your artistic style. It hasn't been brought across slowly to me, but all at once. I'm very glad to see you grow away from your Barry Smith influences, and find your own style. Certain figures in issue 6 in particular looked like Smith's work. You look more comfortable now, in your own style. Well, the bottom of the page is near. Keep up the good work (and belated wishes on your marriage!). You've got one very pleased fan here. Take care!

Wayne Reese
81 Chestnut St.
N. Arlington, N.J.
07032

This is a nice letter. You write very nice letters, Wayne. But just to prove that we don't discriminate against the terminally bizarre, I'm printing the next two letters.

. . .

Dear Dave

I dunno. Maybe it's in my jewish blood. But I'd love to see a character named "Cohen the Barbarian".

I know that's my name, but I swear that it's not an egotistical connection.

Perhaps, one day, Cerebus will meet/greet/team up for an issue with my dream S&S personality. I envision such great Cerebus thoughts as "Cerebus wishes he knew what this dimwit is thinking!"

In any case, I'll continue to buy and read Cerebus until Lord Julius introduces us, the readers, to his brother, Sir Stan of E'Lee.

P.S. If ya didn't get that joke-in-thought, remember: Conan never has thought balloons. 'Nuff said.

Jeffery Cohen
50 Shelley Lane
Great Neck, N.Y.
11023

I know what you mean. Lately I've had this idea for a war title rattling around in my head as a companion to Cerebus called "Frontline Wombat". I won't mess with yours if you don't mess with mine.

. . .

Dear Folks

How about "Cerebral Comments" for a letters-page logo? Or "Cerebrul Sonnets", "Aardvarkian Epistles", "Cerated Sonnets", "Cerated Sonnets to Cerebrus", "Admit it to the Aardvark" and finally (ta da) "Cerebrul comments centered certainly on Cerebrus' cognitive creaters". You make me smile. Many thanks.

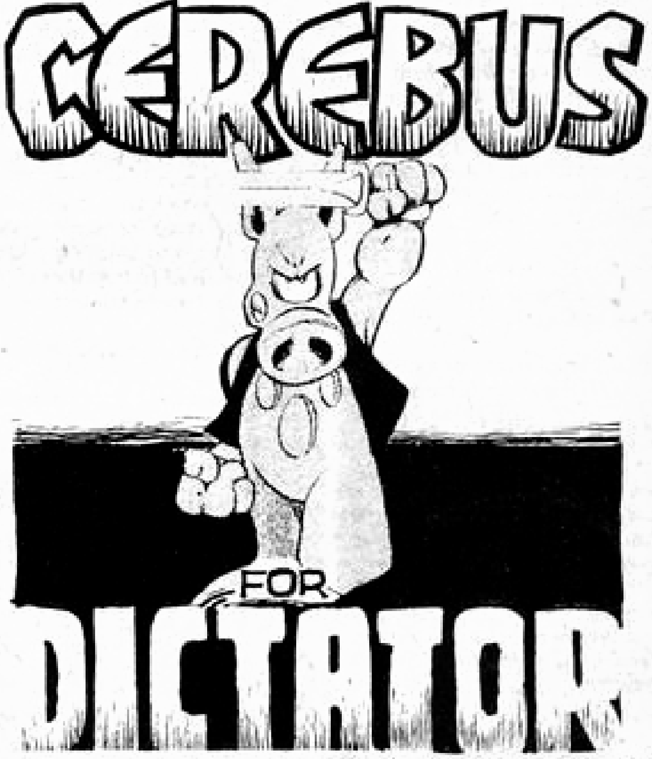
Adrian Colston
14 Down Lane
Bathampton, Bath
Avon, England

This would've impressed the hell out of me, if you hadn't spelled Cerebus wrong.

. . .

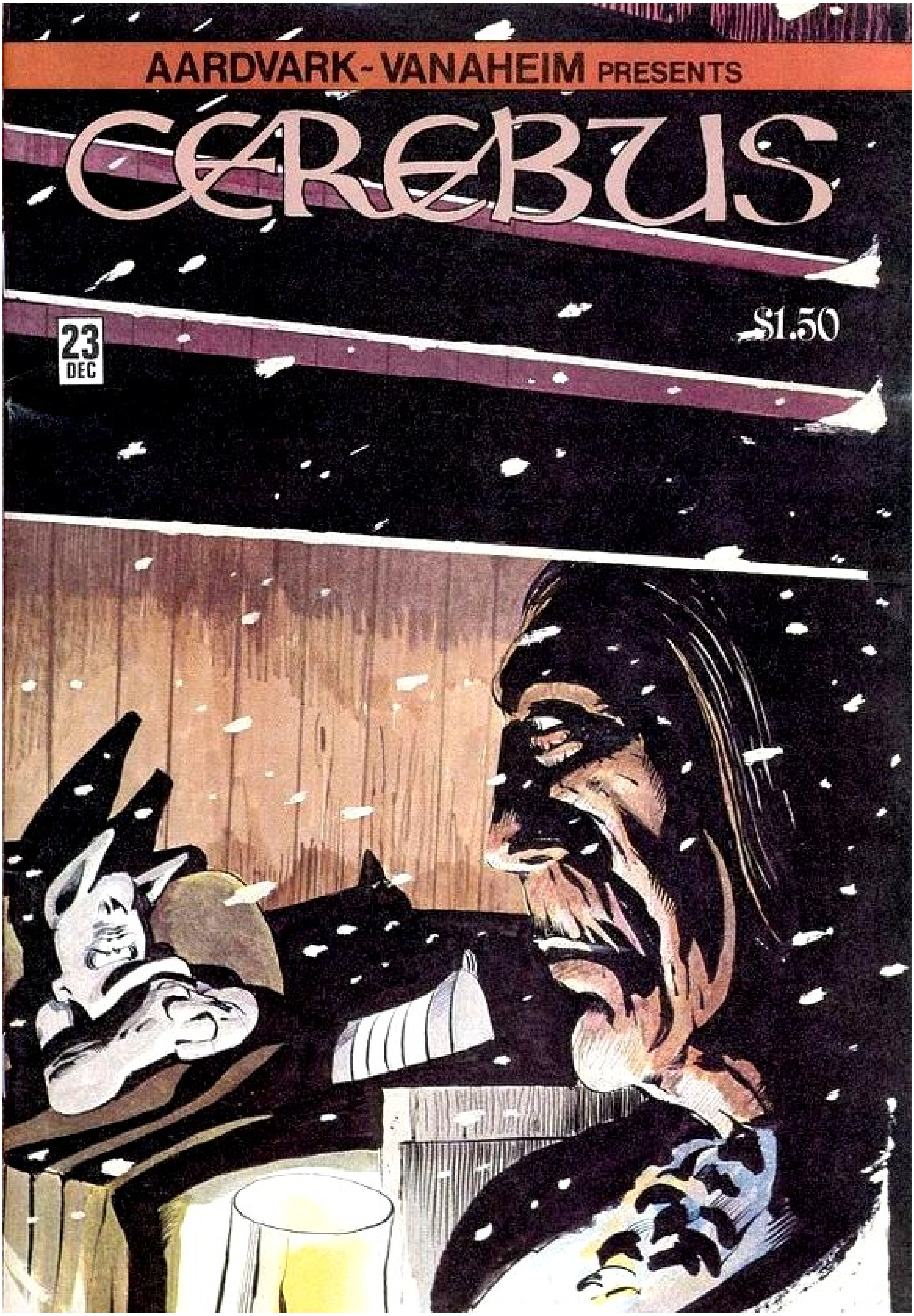
Dave will be at Creation Con. in Rochester on Nov. 22 & 23, and Atlanta, Georgia in January 10 & 11th.

T-SHIRT OFFER



With Reagen and Carter looking like shoo-ins for their nominations, are you considering voting for "None of the above?" Dismayed because Pierre Trudeau has just taken out a twelve year mortgage on 24 Sussex Drive? Have you got the Tweedledee or Tweedledum Blues? Look no further than your nearest Earth-pig. Cerebus lays it all on the line with his campaign for dictator. Any protest from the opposition benches and he'll have them put to the sword. Now you can join the grass-roots movement with your own "Cerebus for Dictator" T-shirt: $5.75 ea. + $1.00 postage and handling (Michigan residents please add 4% sales tax). 10% off for orders of 10 or more. Canadian customers must pay duty upon receipt. Comes in red, orange, yellow, kelly green, cobalt blue and white. S,M,L,XL, please list first and second color choices. Please allow four weeks for delivery. Send orders to: M. Peterson, 1433 White, Ann Arbor, MI, 48104, USA.

THE NO-NONSENSE CANDIDATE ... FOR THE NO-NONSENSE VOTER!


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
23
DEC
$1.50

A Note from the Publisher

This issue has been the one that almost killed us. Between #22 and this one we have had to change printers, find new shippers, and have doubled the print-run. If you think that that's easy to do, as well as set-up the Swords of Cerebus book so it will be printed at the same time as this issue — you've never tried your hand at this business.

I do apologize for the increase in the price of the book. If there had been any way around it, believe me, I would have found it. My little calculator and I worked fevourishly to cut down costs, find a cheaper printer, etc. etc. But all that we did was make sure that Dave and I were still making something from the book, to off-set the rising costs of paper. (There's a shortage you know. It happens when there are lots of big forest fires in the summer.) So the price had to go up, because our rent and food costs don't stay the same. I'm hoping circulation will get another boost in about six months, so we don't have to go through this sort of thing again. It's either that or keep raising the price of the book. And we don't really want to do that.

Obviously, I haven't said a thing about the insides of this issue. Well — I'm not going to. I felt that it speaks well enough for itself, and if we're ever going to get this thing printed I've got to get this going. I've got typesetting to send out, PMT's to get shot and a few million other things. So you read it and let me know how it was!!!!

CEREBUS

Vol. 1 No. 23 Dec. 1980

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Denise Loubert

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THE ARTMAN
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Fort Lee, New Jersey
07024

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Kitchener, Ontario
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If you want information on Cerebus (news, quotes, etc.) contact our Publicity Agent:

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"THE BEGUILING"

CEREBUS No. 23 (December, 1980)

"SWAMP SOUNDS"

CEREBUS No. 24 (January, 1981)

"THIS WOMAN, THIS THING"

CEREBUS No. 25 (March, 1981)

I'm not like a lot of other professionals in comics. You probably already knew that. One of the major differences is that I am not a collector of comics and comics-related material. Almost every other professional I have met or who is a friend of mine, at some point in a convention where they are a guest, will make a quick run through the dealer's room in search of stuff. Some of them buy lots of stuff. Some of them only buy weird stuff. Some of them buy plastic laser guns that go "whoop whoop whoop" and "sprazz gluk gluk". Most of them buy cheap stuff (I'll resist the temptation at this point to pass judgement on what that says about them as people). "Look at this great Ditko cover I got for twenty-eight cents," they'll say, beaming. "Mmmmmm", I'll say, staring distractedly into the distance.

Gene Day was one of the most seriously afflicted of my professional friends.

I mean, his house (or at least half of it) looks like a comic shop. Rooms and rooms and rooms of comic books and magazines and toys and figurines and reprint collections and xeroxes and . . . well, you get the idea. Ron at the Silver Snail in Toronto and Harry at Now and then Books in Kitchener used to make out like bandits on those rare occasions when Gene would venture southwest — ostensibly to do a signing, but more often than not to help those two gentlemen with their cash flow. I used to tell him that he should take the whole shop home and send back anything he decided he didn't want. The problem was he would probably only have sent back two comics and a movie poster.

He was a genre junkie. War movies, Westerns, Sci-Fi (I know you're not supposed to call it that, but I'm in a perverse mood). We'd go out to a restaurant for a couple of greasy burgers and fries after a hard afternoon at the board and Gene would rave at great length about the last Clint Eastwood film. He would describe in meticulous detail how the bullets had hit this guy in a straight line on his chest moving diagonally up towards his shoulder just about cutting him in half and how there's this great three-quarter bird's eye view shot of this guy climbing a mountain and then you see him through the telescopic sight just before he gets blown away by this fuckin' great looking grenade launcher that looks like Kirby drew it.

I would nod a bit and then tell him about this great scene in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf" when Elizabeth Taylor pushes Richard Burton a little too far and he does this great speech about how "You can't quit just when you get enough blood in your mouth. No, we're going on and I'm going to have at you and it's going to make your little performance here tonight look like a tea party".

I don't think I ever had more fun with someone with whom I had less in common than Gene. So it was largely for Gene that I decided to do a Clint Eastwood Cerebus Story.

My kind of Clint Eastwood Cerebus story.

"The Beguiled" was probably the only Eastwood film that Gene didn't like. At all. Which is understandable. It is the story of a wounded Civil war soldier trapped in enemy territory finding sanctuary at a private girl's school. There's not a whole lot of action to it, but the structure and pacing are wonderful. It's one of those movies I will watch again and again. Sometimes just a fragment of it while I'm flipping channels, sometimes the first half, sometimes the last half.

It seemed particularly appropriate for the kind of mood I was trying to develop in Cerebus at this time. Very real-seeming situations. Very natural-seeming people. Besides, I have always been fascinated by young beautiful females.

Well, that too, but also because they talk in the most amazing way about the most extraordinary things. The whole idea of three of them living at a private school out in the middle of nowhere, insulated from the big bad world retaining all the best qualities of innocent youth while the onset of puberty wreaks havoc with their . . . . .

Ahem.

Not to mention the comedic possibilities of a belligerent little cuss like Cerebus, having seen more of the seamy underside of life in Estarcion than any ten people, having to deal with them. I'm still quite proud of the end of part one when the Sepran soldier shows up, followed quickly by his underling. Some day the Mafia is going to put me in a pair of cement overshoes and drop me from a tenth floor window at the Harbourcastle Hotel, but until then, Sepran dialogue will always be a good means to extract a giggle or two.

But there was something out there.

Having worked so hard to develop the many layers of the previous two issue storyline — largely for my own amusement and as a kind of discipline, I suppose — I decided that this story-line needed the same treatment. It would just be too easy to keep the plot as a re-working of "The Beguiled" and gradually expand the characters of Janet, Katrina and Theresa (Deni's middle names are Janet Katherine and her sister Karen's is Theresa, by the way).

There was something out there.

I decided to do a tongue-in-cheek treatment of Chris Claremont's X-men series. Having read (and heard) so often at this time that Chris, when faced with developing a new character in the series, would ask, sometimes rhetorically but more often not, "Is there any reason this character can't be a woman?" I decided to bring in Professor Charles X. Claremont and turn the whole previous story-line upside-down. I decided as well to mix in a parody of two muck monsters that had been published simultaneously and, by all reports, coincidentally, by Marvel and DC. Marvel had a series called Man-Thing about a large shambling green monster who burned people to death if they showed any fear. Sort of a double bind considering that there is only one natural reaction to seeing a ten foot green monster coming towards you. DC published Swamp thing, a wonderful mixture of Frankenstein and The Creature from The Black Lagoon. Marvel was also on a kick at this time about protecting their trademark on major characters by doing female versions of them. They ended up doing two around the same time — Spider-Woman and She-Hulk. The implication of this move, at least in my mind, was that any publisher doing a female version of a Marvel character that wasn't Spider-Woman or She-Hulk would have free rein to use those characters —Thingette, The Woman Torch. So taking the bull by the horns, I decided to do Woman-Thing. In light of the recent upset over using the Wolveroach, you might say that karma is still a working force in the universe.

By the way, just so you guys stop sending Jim Shooter nasty letters about the way the whole thing was handled, I'll tell you that Jim apologized to me just before an Aardvark-Vanaheim panel in Chicago this summer. As suspected, the decision to send the letter was largely a corporate one in Cadence Industries' legal department. From what information I have been able to gather, someone in the legal department who was not a comic book fan got interested in Cerebus. A good friend of

CONTINUED IN ISSUE 24

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dave,

I may be jumping the gun here, but if that transition from #20 to #21 isn't given a good explanation soon, I'll be forced to conclude that you wrote yourself into a corner and took a cheap way out. I'm especially upset because I really liked #20 and what was going on, and then to jump right into this cockroach hotel was rather a shock. One of your writing strong points in the clever banter between Cerebus and everyone else, but balloon placement in #20 was a little difficult to follow. Kill Elrod! No! How do you pronounce Hsiffies. How did you like the Heatwave concert. I was there too and thought it was fantastic. Keep it up.

Dennis Summers
242 Cedar Street Apt. 4
East Lansing, Mich.
48823

Sorry about #21. It was SUPPOSED to be the same shock for you as it was for Cerebus. At least that was the idea. Hsiffies is pronounced without the "H" -- siffies. Heatwave was a lot of fun all right.

Dear Deni and Dave,

Keep up the good work on Cerebus! I first discovered him with number 17 and now have located and am in the process of buying all the back issues.

I have heard that you are going to reprint issue 1 through 10 and as well, put them in different volumes of Swords of Cerebus. (That is, you are going to reprint them singly and also in volumes). If you are going to reprint them singly, please put the word 'reprint' or some other telltale mark on the covers so as not to make the hard to get original issue one commonplace. This would not take away from the reprints, and it would add to the originals. I'm sure that all of the people who have bought back issues (at a copy of Cerebus for $3.00 mailed away for it, waited for it, and when I finally got it, the same copy of Cerebus (a reprint but could the average Cerebug tell that?) came to a local comic-shop for $1, I would be quite annoyed.

Well onto a different topic. Cerebus the Aardvark and Aardvark Vanaheim have inspired me to check into comics other than Marvel and DC. This has added dimension to my life. I feel indebted to Thanx and Punchem Innaface.

Cyprien Lomas
4485 S Stn. Ave.
Vancouver, B.C. V6R 1S4

Our final decision on reprinting has been to drop the idea of redoing individual issues (largely for the reasons you mention). We will be reprinting SWORDS OF CEREBUS, however, as demand dictates, so that the individual stories never become unavailable.

Dear Dave,

I would have written this letter even if you hadn't asked for letters in Cerebus #20, but it probably would've taken me a while longer to gather my thoughts and get this letter written. Anyway:

I'd like to see a checklist of Cerebus stories (or even of your other aardvark stories, like "A Boy and his Aardvark," which I have but didn't connect with you until I reread it awhile ago). Where can I order BLACK ZEPPELIN #1?

Michael Loubert's article about a wargaming simulation of the siege of Fluroc gave me an idea: What about defining the characters in CEREBUS using the rules of some of the role-playing games currently available? For instance, here are the specs on Cerebus for all of you familiar with "The Fantasy Trip" (MELEE & WIZARD).

ST 11
Dx 15
IQ 13
MA 8

weapons: short sword, small shield. -3 DX for all attacks on him because of his small size. Skills: sword, shield, horsemanship, literacy, alertness, recognize value, business sense, unarmed combat I. I realize some people may think that giving a three foot tall earth pig a strength of 11 is excessive, but remember how he defeated the revolutionary leader in Hand-to-Hand combat in CEREBUS #14? Also, don't forget that dwarves are small, but are often stronger than humans.

Or, for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: ST 12, IQ 14, W 16, DEX 16, Con 14 weapons: same as above. I'd place Cerebus as a fighter/thief of about 8th-10th level.

But what about RUNEQUEST, TUNNELS & TROLLS, CHIVALRY & SORCERY, etc.? I'd appreciate hearing from people who play those games -- also, if you've got any comments about the above descriptions, please let me know about them.

Also what about specs for other CEREBUS characters; Henrot, Commander Krull, Red Sophia, The Shadow Crawler, Geet-a, Necross the HAHAHA! Mad, and (especially) the Gerbles!

If I had anything else to say, I've forgotten it by now.

Keep up the "Good Work"!

Sincerely,
Brent Iverson,
4131 Markley Frost,
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Uh-oh. I think Michael may have started something here.

Dear Dave,

Cerebus #20 gave me the hiccups.

Mike Bannon,
2453 Martin Drive
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

Try drinking four gallons of water while standing on your head. If that doesn't work, ST 11 DX 15 IQ 13 MA 8. It seems to work for Cerebus.

Dear Dave & Deni

I've been reading Cerebus since a roomie pressed issue #1 in my hands and said "I think you'll like this." I was at the London Annual Fun Fest (or whatever) when the third issue was passed out, and I was told that that lizard-headed man over there was Dave Sim. I have another autographed issue that my friend Denice Rehse brought back from another of those LAFF-cons.

Cerebus and I go back a long way. You've steadily improved from a pretty good beginning to become the best comic put out today and certainly the funniest. Now comes the painful part.

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

How, I say HOW, can you consider offing Elrod? You must have baked your brains at Mosport! (I picked up a mild sunburn, myself; next time I think I'll bring along a pith helmet. Maybe I could make one from my burnt-out left headlight -- but I digress.)

Puncheminnaface! Elrod is by far the most sympathetic creature around -- an amiable half-wit who just wants to be liked. Contrasted to the manic Cockroach, grumpy aardvark hero, or conniving Lord Julius, he's about the only guy in the comic I'd like to have live down the street. Don't kill him! I mean it!

Cerebus sure is cute when he's crocked isn't he? His eyes get so dreamy...

Another gripe I have -- it's not enough interfering with your creative planning, now I'm gonna criticize -- is the way you often open issues with a complete change of characters, locale, and plot, when you were in the middle of something else last issue. In the space of a page, or between the last page of one issue and the beginning of the next, Cerebus jumps from Lower Felda to Palnu, or Togith to Beduin, loses an army, gains a position, etc. etc. Try to make the narrative a bit more continuous when possible.

What's wrong with the President's ankle?

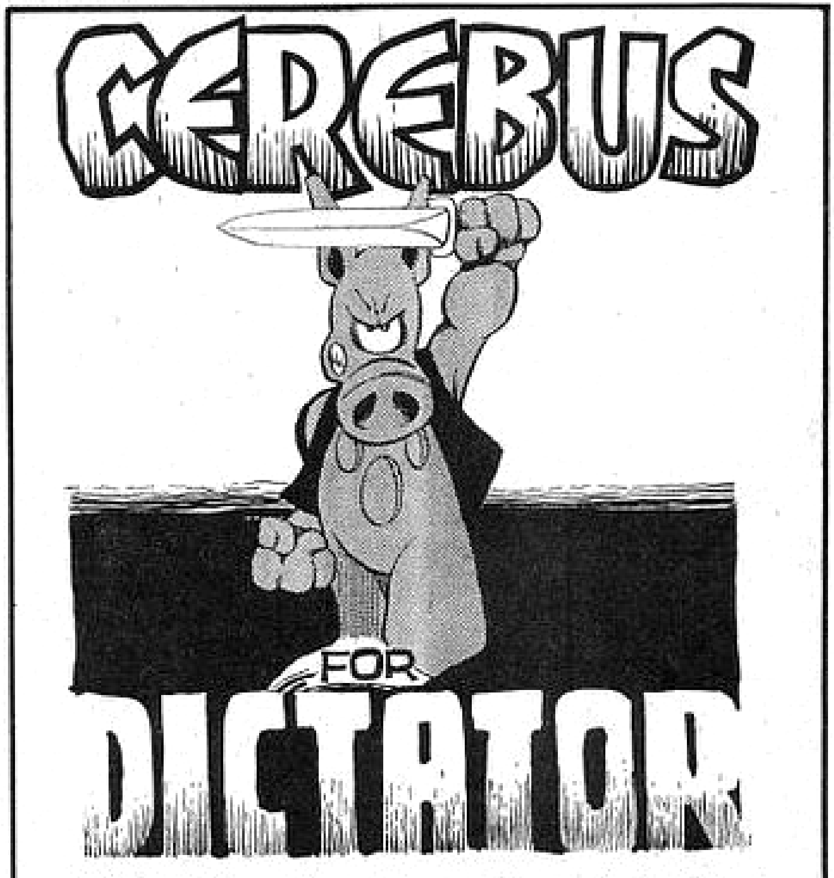
But anyway, I love your work, especially the dry wit and broad humour that reigns throughout; I like the line about "If you can't fool all of the people all of the time you should start breeding for stupidity."

Finally I hope you're going to explain how Cerebus gotto Beduin if the city is so well-guarded. And even if it wasn't for that matter. We left him comatose, presumably in Togith. (Explain that one, lizard-face.) Well, best regards and all, yer awed admirer,

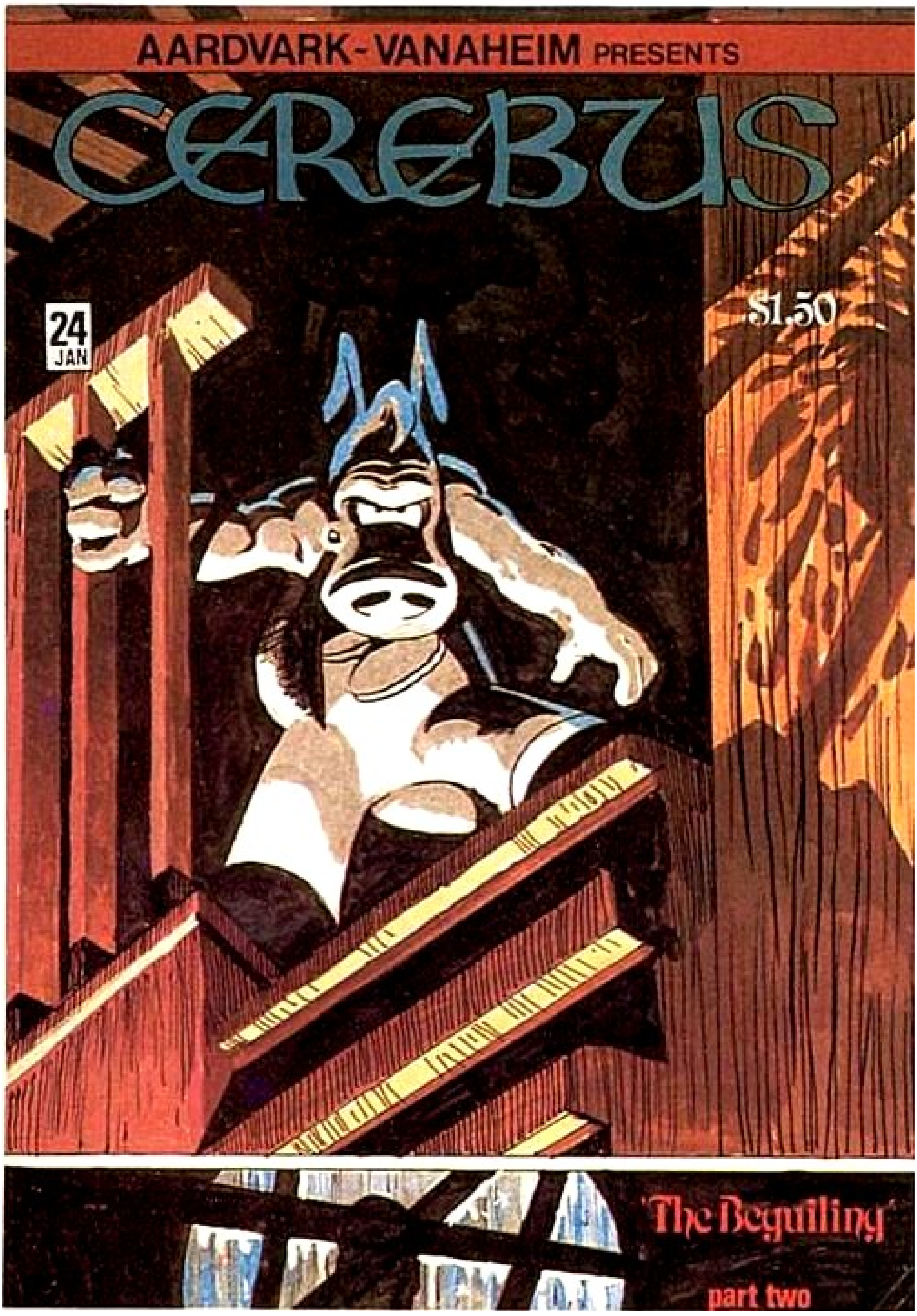
Steven R. Trout
12841 Chelsea Apt. 12B
Detroit, MI 48213

P.S. One of my current projects is an overview of CEREBUS 1-21; What would you say is the most important thing you've accomplished with Cerebus thus far? Say something great and quotable, please.

Something great and quotable, please. walked into that one didn't you] I guess, aside from staying on the bi-monthly and now the monthly schedule (no mean feat, believe me), I would say it was introducing the idea of coherent plots to comic book humour. A situation comedy as opposed to theatre of the absurd as exemplified by Harvey Kurtzman, Will Elder, Jack Cole, et al. As to what's wrong with the President's ankle, you'll just have to ask Nancy. Personally, I think his ankle is going to be the least of our worries for the next four years.



With Ronald Reagan's finger taking up residence on the Oval Button in January, it is our firm belief that it is time to start planning for 1984. It was only by starting early, after all, that Jimmy Carter managed to oust Richard Nixon II in 1976. Owing to his extraordinary commitment to a monthly publishing schedule, (as well as a distinct reluctance to shake hands at factory gates for four years) Cerebus will be unable to campaign in person. But you can help bring common sense and a ruthless disregard for human rights to your nation's highest office. What half-baked religious nut in some back-water Arab state with more oil than brains would dare to stand against an Earth-pig born? Cerebus promises to cut taxes by looting every five bedroom house in Maryland. There's never been an anti-Washington candidate like this one. Start wearing your Cerebus for Dictator T-shirt now... remember, you're either with him or against him. And if you're against him, the odds are pretty good you won't live past Inauguration Day. Canadian readers are also welcome to order, purely for fun, since they already have a dictator. $5.75 ea. plus 1.00 postage and handling (Michigan residents please add 4% sales tax). 10% off for orders of 10 or more. Canadian customers must pay duty upon receipt. Comes in red, orange, yellow, kelly green, cobalt blue and white. S,M,L,XL. Please list first and second color choices. Please allow four weeks for delivery. Send orders to M Peteron, 1433 White, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
24
JAN
$1.50
'The Beguiling'
part two

A Note from the Publisher

This issue's editorial is going to (I hope) be brief. For starters, I would like to apologise for this issue and last issue being so late. It couldn't be helped, but I will try and not let it happen again. I haven't seen last issue yet and this one should be going to the printers tomorrow. This sort of thing hasn't happened to me before, as our printer was in Kitchener before. But costs going up the way they do it was time to shop around. To make a long story short, a month later I had two new printers (one for the insides and one for the cover) and we were way past deadline time. The artwork got lost, the shippers got confused, but in the end the art was found and right now they are printing the issue (I hope). It's a bit late, but better late than never. So this issue was held up a bit too, but I'm hoping we'll be back on schedule by next issue. So, I hope to see you then with happier news. . . .

CEREBUS

Vol. 1 No. 24 Jan. 1981

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Denise Loubert

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Dave Sim

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If you want information on Cerebus (news, quotes, etc.) contact our Publicity Agent:

Robert W. Rittinger

Kitchener, Ontario

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mine at Marvel gave this individual a bunch of Cerebus to read. When he saw the Wolverine parody, three covers in sequence, he saw that it threatened Marvel's trademark because permitting me to do such a thing, without official notice being served to cease and desist, was tantamount to legally implying that Wolverine was now in the public domain. Graciously, Jim informed me that any time I wanted to do something like that, I had only to notify Marvel and they would send me a letter waiving their copyright for a specific use of the character. As I understand it, this would only apply to situations where I would want to make this kind of extended use of a character. That is to say, The Moon Roach was okay because he was a story device used over an extended period. He never appeared on consecutive covers and consequently was not a major and or pivotal selling point for a series of issues. The Wolveroach was, and all Marvel would have to do is find a few fans who bought that issue because Wolverine . . . or someone who looked an awful lot like him . . . appeared in that issue and on the cover, and they would have an open-and-shut case. Although it was just a giggle at the time (splash a character all across the cover and then have him lying unconscious upstairs through the issue), I concede the point, guys. It was unfair usage. If I stick to using Marvel characters to the same extent that Chris made use of the giant aardvark character S'ym in the X-men, I wouldn't expect to hear a peep out of them. If they do a S'ym mini-series with that character on the cover and make him grey instead of purple, I will be right on the front lines. Suing their asses off, because they're in the wrong? No, sending a very terse letter to the legal department telling them to stop. Because it's really not that bad a way to settle something when you know the law is on your side.

So much for the fun part of this introduction.

Do you know that I have only redone one of the introductions since I started doing Swords? The introduction was for issue 11 (Swords 3 if you aren't very good at math). It dealt at great length and in meticulous detail with the nervous breakdown I had in the summer of 1979. The two events were so fully integrated in my mind, that I felt that there was no way I could side-step the issue and still paint an accurate picture of my state of mind and creative decision-making for that time period. When I had it done, I realized that what I had written was very personal and had little or no bearing on the book.

I started over and worked around it. No problem.

I knew when I started working on this volume of Swords that the problem going to come up again. My first reaction when I finally turn my attention to one of these volumes is to try and remember who I was and what I was doing at the time I was working on a particular issue. No problem with these issues.

Well, actually there is a problem. The problem is that what I have to say from here on in is with the idea of making a point. Some people won't agree with the point ("Ah, c'mon, Dave, you're exaggerating") some people won't even get the point ("Huh?"), some people will understand what I'm saying and probably get depressed ("Ah, shit, Dave. I paid six bucks to read this?). I'm in a no-win situation. So, for however you take this, if it means something to you, you're welcome. If you think it's a waste of ink and you're more than a little pissed off, I can't say as I disagree with you considering that you expect lots of ha-ha in these introductions and how long you had to wait for Volume six. I can promise, however, that I will put away the soap-box when I'm done and get back to lots of ha-ha in time for "A Night on the Town".

There was something out there.

I incorporated the feeling into the book. It was a very strong feeling that I had that fall. I felt hesitant about developing the Apocalypse Beast story-line since #24 was already filling up with explanations of why everything wasn't as it seemed in #23. The Beast seemed out of place somehow, and I couldn't help feeling that I was addressing something that was happening or which was going to happen.

I really couldn't.

You have to understand that doing a comic book for seven years with no one else assisting in the direction of it becomes a very intense kind of self-therapy in the long run. Very often I will recognize an allegory that I hadn't intended consciously. Sometimes it will be months later before I see it. I'm entertaining people, but at the same time I am talking to myself. In coming up with situations and circumstances recognizable to a wide audience, you see yourself as inspiration, resource and pattern. Very often these realizations of what I'm talking about can be unnerving. No one else would ever recognize them (Thank God), not even those closest to me, but I will.

So picture that I had decided to make Charles X. Claremont this enormous negative force who wants to destroy everything around him. And he's in search of the magical means with which to accomplish it. And I give it to him.

Believe it or not, I am sane enough to look at something like that and say "What the hell am I doing?" Suffice it to say that I had a very bad feeling about introducing the means to destroy the world I was creating into the story-line and to begin moving in the direction of bringing it about. Call it being self-conscious about my subconscious, anyone who sets out to do something like that in his means of creative expression is talking about making a big ca-ca of some kind. Subconsciously or otherwise.

Those of you who have read the introduction to the story "The Morning After" in Swords volume 2, will remember my trip to Rochester. Just to save you the trouble of stripping the tape off the back of a mylar bag or going out and buying a copy, I was at a convention in Rochester, a city which I characterized as "cold as a bitch" and "dead as a doornail".

The Friday night I arrived in Rochester was very very cold indeed. As is my wont, I found my own way to the Con Hotel with the idea of doing a little writing and relaxing before the Con began the next morning. It was the night the television program, Dallas, was going to reveal "Who Shot J.R.". Synchronistically, it was November 22, the seventeenth anniversary of the JFK assassination in, synchronistically, Dallas, Texas. Literally, the show was all anyone was talking about in the lobby, the restaurant, the elevators. The place emptied as 9:00 approached. I ended up in my room, watching the show, even though I hardly knew who J.R. **was,** let alone having any suspicions as to the identity of his assailant.

The next night, (as I related in the aforementioned Swords introduction) I was invited out for a good old time by a couple of dealer type-types. I drank considerable in a number of different bars.

What I left out of the introduction last time was the handgun.

We got ready to leave the last bar around 3:00 in the morning and Bill (not his real name) was teasing Rick (not his real name) in a good-natured way about the odds on getting mugged in the neighborhood we were in.

Rick said something to the effect of, "Then I'd just have to use this", and pulled his pocket open a little so Bill and I could see the handgrip of a .38 revolver.

"What did you bring that for?" Bill asked, in the tone of someone asking a friend why he brought flippers to go skiing.

I was about to ask the same thing in the tone of someone asking a friend why he was using a lighter to check how much gas is left in the barbecue.

"Hey", said Rick, the voice of sweet reason. "Some asshole wants to mug me I want to be able to put a few holes in him."

I couldn't believe that two guys who made their living off of funny books could be having this conversation in the wee small hours of the morning. We decided to go back to the hotel and continue our drinking with a bottle that Bill had brought with him for just such a late-night emergency. When we got back to their room, Rick put the gun on the small table that seems to be endemic to Holiday Inns everywhere.

"Take the bullets out," I said.

AARDVARK COMMENT

- KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W6

Dear Dave & Deni-

I hope this letter finds you (and your irascible earth-pig) in good health and high spirits (apricot brandy I hope). Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, folks!

And speaking of holidays...(nice segue, huh?). I was inspired by a photo you published of David Sellnow to send you some pix of my brother's Halloween costume from two years ago and our "Cerebus the Pumpkin." Both are my creations.

Now for the important stuff: Cerebus #'s 21 and 22 were tops! Encore! Elrod and Cockroach (a somewhat more patriotic version) back again! Who could ask for more? Not a true Cerebus fan surely. The parodies were fantastically funny and the art! ... the best testament I can give you to show how I loved it is that within an hour of buying the issues (no exaggeration) I had a piece of original art from #21! Superb!! I hope to see more parody like Red Sophia, Geeta, Henrot, Elrod, Brank Mak Mufin, Capt. Cockroach and Bunky, Krull, Lord Julius (My God, the list is endless)!

If there seem to be a lot of exclamation points here, it's only cuz you deserve 'em!!!

Go with Tarim!!!

Jeff Christian,
13 Peppermill Rd.,
Chatham TWP, N.J. 07928

If anyone else out there has photographs of costumes, figurines or other aardvark paraphenalia... or if the aardvark at your neighborhood zoo is especially photogenic, send us black and white prints that we will selfishly keep even though it wouldn't cost that much to return them. Remember now that's "Aardvark Comment Overt Ego-Boo Department" at the address above.

Dear Denise and Dave:

Have I tell you how much I like Cerebus. You know, I see only one artist to compare you with. Because even the Jones, Wrightsons and who else, how good they can draw, how fantastics artists they can be, they could never tell a story like you do. That artist I'm talking about it is the great Will Eisner. I don't say you draw like him, I say you walk in the same passes of artistic mastery, let's hope you will become as good as he is today.

Well, I wish you one hundred Cerebus numbers, Take care.

P.S. I ain't a wonder in english writing. If you can understand french, it will be easily to me.

Mr. Renaud Rene
Gerenstein 501 1103 Av
Amsterdam The Netherlands

I ain't a wonder in french writing. My sister-in-law could translate though. French will be easily to her.

Dear Dave and Deni

That creep that drugged Cerebus' drink must have given him LSD or if not LSD than that spider had some wicked venom. I've never experienced a flashback of the drug for that matter but the beginning of issue 8 definitely was a hell of a way to treat any behaving aardvark. You've got an excellent comic. I could say more but I've read your letters page, and when Michael Moorcock congratulates you or Frank Thorne, you've been congratulated. I must tell you I've stopped buying Marvel's H.T.D. Your comic is the best, — the rest. Anyway, the short grey killer that looks like a bunny is destined to stardom. I love your art, the layout and most of all the character you've put into the aardvark. I have read up to issue #21 and am moreso convinced it's the best. I play Dugeons and Dragons as a money saving pasttime. I play an aardvark in the game, it's excellent. Your stories resemble the kind of situations the character has run into. I also have carved and worked out a lead figure. So I may play the character in a more visual light. If you have ever had any dealing with the game, you know a character has certain attributes. Cerebus is the only one who retains the dreaded aardvark nose punch. The punch is worth from a D/6 to two D/4s of damage. I thought that might entertain you.

I'm writing this after reading the whole set from #2 to #17 in succession. Your comic is a new high standard in comic excellence.

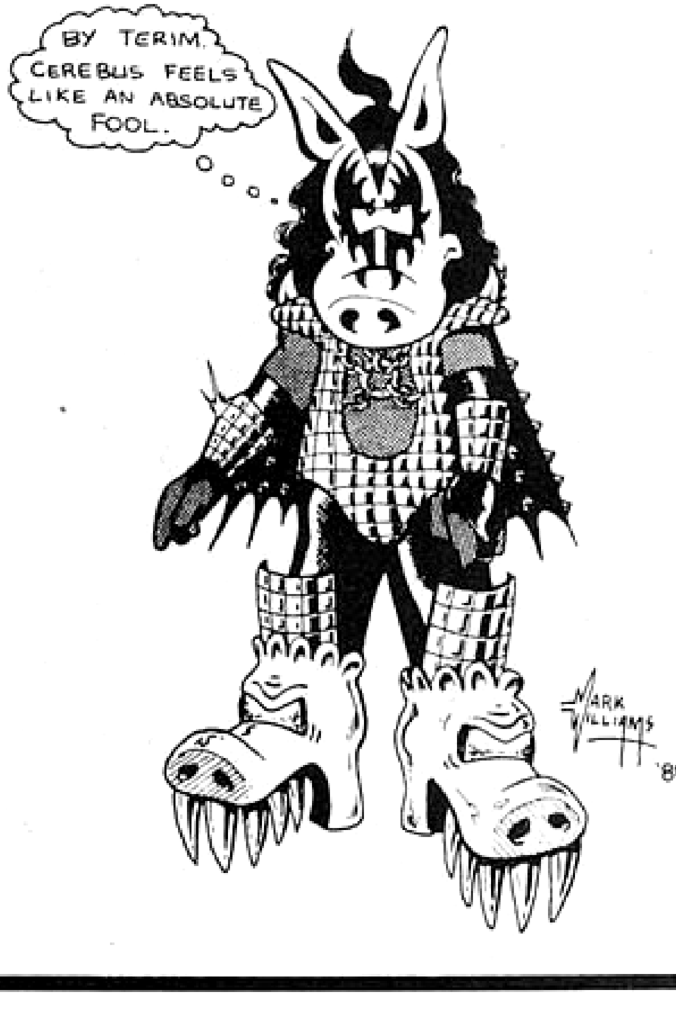
P.S. I'm on a life-time quest for Cerebus #1, can you help me? I've got to have it at any cost. Also, when they say original artwork, do they mean the pages that went to the printer? Please reply. (Note from Deni... the answer is yes)

Randall M. Rode
PSC #5 Box #6773
Lowry A.F.B. CO.
80230

Bruce Bergstrom, the artman whose address appears on our inside front cover has a copy of #1 for sale for $100.00. First one to get to him with a cheque for that amount gets it. Considering that there are only 2000 copies of it and our circulation is now 12000, I doubt that it will be too long before he sells it. Why wait until the next Price Guide comes out!

Dear Dave and Deni

Ahh — I haven't written nearly as much as I should, but I'm sure you (of all people) understand the scarcity of time a working artist has. But I did want to let you know I am enjoying our little aardvark friend - and the change to monthly


BY TERIM, CEREBUS FEELS LIKE AN ABSOLUTE FOOL.
MARK WILLIAMS
'80

AARDVARK COMMENT

- KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W6

hasn't seemed to hurt the book at all - much to my surprise. Good work, Dave!

The last issue I saw was quite an interesting experiment - using virtually no backgrounds - just millions (hundreds?) of pictures of Cerebus. Very clever. And I think it worked, over all. The first few pages confused the hell out of me - but eventually I caught on to what you were doing. I really enjoy it when you try and stretch the medium a bit like that. Keep it up.

In case you're wondering what I've been up to lately, I'm enclosing a couple of xerox sets, one is a five page story scheduled for Dope Comix #4 - the other a recently compiled M. Gilbert/Jeff Bonivert collaberation. We'll be trying for Epic and Heavy Metal on that one. Wish us luck. OK - enough. A milion things to do and no time to do em in! Oh - and congrats on your 20th anniversary - I'll be looking forward to the next 20!!

Michael T. Gilbert
905 Ellingson Lane
Austin, Texas 78751

It's always nice to hear from someone on our freebie list. Everyone who misses The Wraith since Quack stopped publication, please raise your hands. Special thanks to Michael Gilbert for sending me the two stories. Watch for Dinner Party in Dope Comix #4.

Dear Dave and Deni

Just read #21 and I do say Cerebus is a cad when he's bombed! The popping in and out of drunkeness was a nice touch. (The scene where Cerebus knocked himself out had me reeling for over an hour ...oopsie?!! Ha Ha Ha giggle giggle snort mmph...there.)

Captain America is one of my favorite Marv. characters, and I do say you do a good parody.

Also, please don't kill Elrod!!! I just got into Moorcock, (having read only Dreaming City and Sleeping Sorceress) the parody (yours I mean) made me look into Elric, and I'd hate to see old Elrod kick off.

'sides would Bunky's death cause the good captain to go into suspended animation? Symbolic heroes have a tendency to do that, ya know.

One last suggestion, make the battle between Gorces and Stromms forces into a double-sized issue! No, forget that, a 100 page issue! (There, I've babbled, as Moorcock fans have a tendency to do). One question, will Cerebus wear armour in the battle? Anyway, Cerebus is great. The story and art. Keep it up Dave.

Roger Cadenhead
217 NE Rosamond
Burleson, TX 76028

Cerebus is getting a little old for going into battle, Roger - he's more the type to stay in the little tent at the top of the hill with a bottle of ten year old whiskey and a fast horse in case his offensive unit gets massacred in the first half. Sometime I'll do an issue with a war in it and you'll see.

Dear Dave and Deni

I just finished Cerebus #21, and I must say I am truly overwhelmed. "Captain Cockroach" was absolutely brilliant. I have been a Captain America fan for years, but already I like "Cocky" more - and he's only appeared twice.

The one thing I am disturbed about is casting Elrod as Bucky Barnes. We all know what happened to Bucky, right? I'd hate to see my favorite albino bite the dust after such a brief career. Please try to keep him around.

By now you are probably wondering about the enclosed drawing. You are not seeing things. Yes, that is Cerebus wearing a Gene Simmons costume. Why? Well - if you take a look at the letters page of Howard the duck #29, you will find a drawing of Howard as Gene. Yep, I drew it.

Why did I subject Cerebus to the same thing? Because after the drawing was published, my career as a professional artist skyrocketed. I've done ducks as kiss, ducks as Rocky Horror, ducks as everything. I have gotten many things published because of that drawing and I thought I'd tribute Cerebus the way I did Howard.

In finishing, I'd like to tell everyone that: yes I do like kiss. Yes I do draw stuff besides ducks and aardvarks (I'm currently working on a non funny animal story for Heavy Metal). and yes, I'm looking for a Cerebus #1 (can anyone help?)

Mark Williams
1278 Pompano St.
San Jose, Calif. 95122

Bruce? Got another one for you. Thanks to Mark for the drawing which appears elsewhere on these pages.

Dear Dave and Deni

Another masterwork. What can I say? (better think of something.) I must admit, I was a little worried about the death of Elrod. Next to the bunny, he's probably the best character in the book. Naturally, I had nothing to worry about, but who knew that at the time?

Deadalbino is great. A little long to read, maybe, but still great. Doesn't Elrod find his skull a little drafty now? More than it was before, I mean. Too bad he's stuck in his trade-in. Lots of possibilities in Deadalbino.

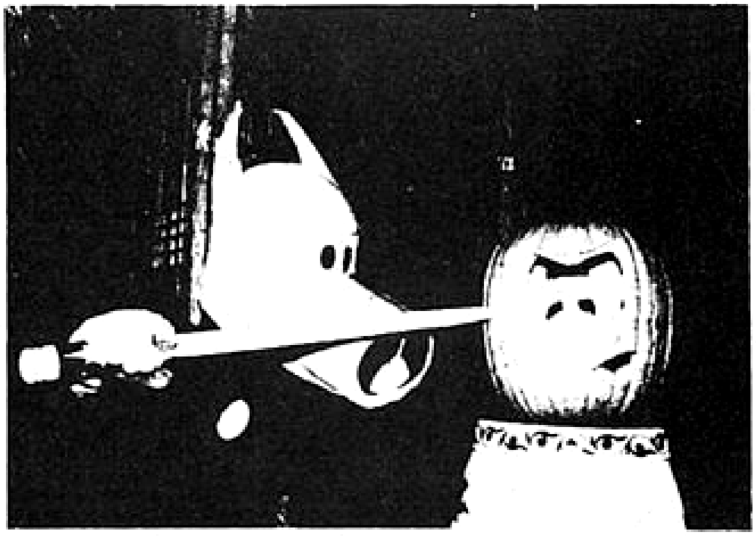
Just how long was Cerebus out for? How the **** did he get to Beduin? I sense the need for a lengthy flash-back.

By-the-by, is that position of First Secretary of the Interior still open? I'm quite confident I could fill the post. Ninety-five percent of the time, anyways.

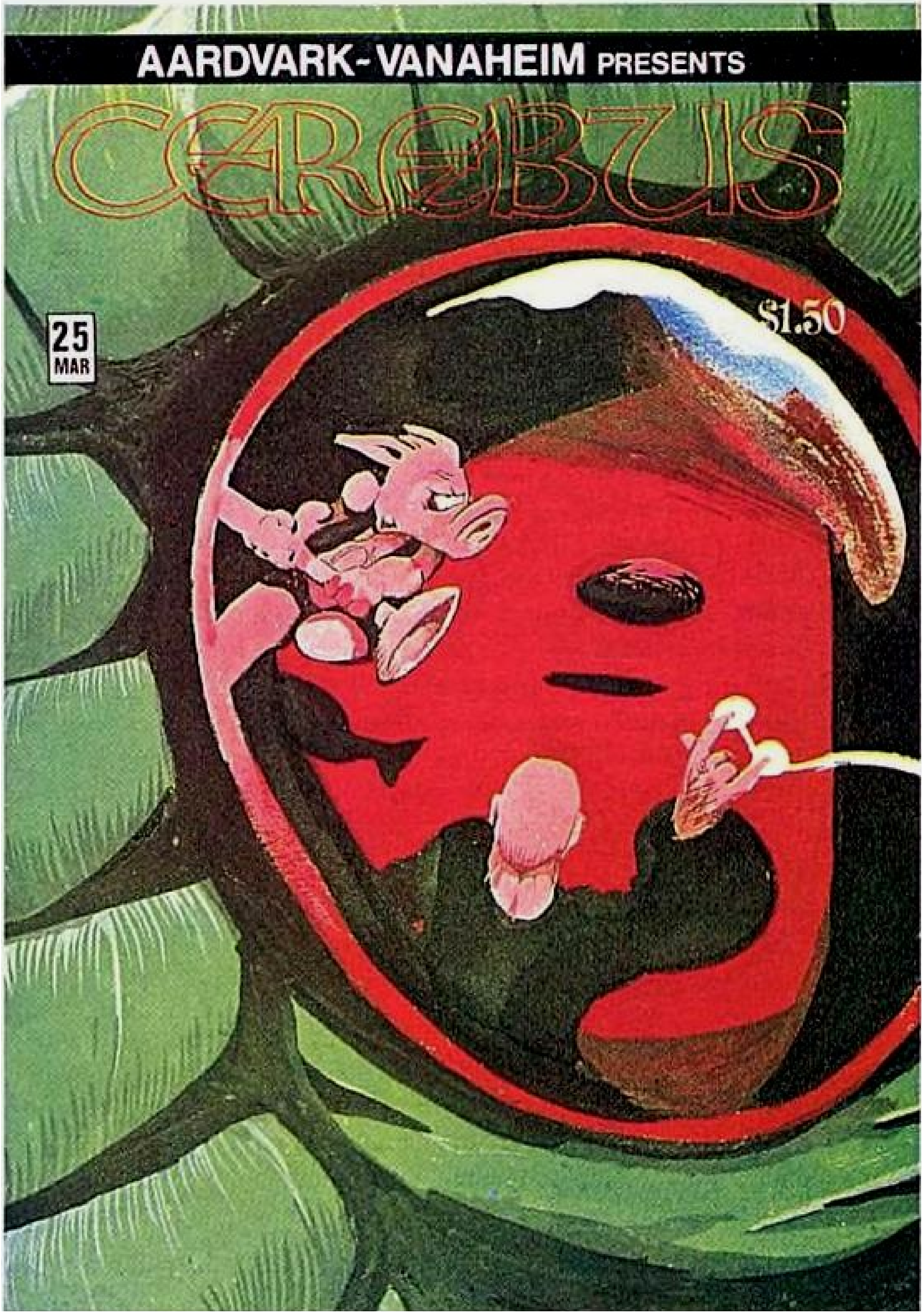
Oh, yeah, before I forget, I loved the Detective parody cover. Is that it? Seems to be. It's six a.m. I don't function too well this early.

Merry Xman (oops. Xmas)
Jon Marvin
1230 Radom St. #14
Pickering, Ont.

What can I say? (Better think of something, too). Cerebus was unconscious for about a month or so. In order to recount everything that happened to him, I would have to devote at least a full issue to telling you a story with Cerebus unconscious in the middle of it. I might even need a two page story. Forty pages of the earth-pig. Limp. Breathing deeply. With his eyes closed. Let me know if it's worth three bucks to you.



Jeff Christian's nameless younger brother menaces a pumpkin carved in the image of everyone's favourite earth-pig. A pseudo-Barry Smith folding panel lurks in the background reflecting the emotional turmoil of our foreground characters. This, I tell you, is story-telling!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A Note from the Publisher

Between issue 24 and issue 25, I went to my first "big-time" hockey game. Because I had always watched the Toronto team on television, I had never before experienced what a hockey crowd is like. It helped my to understand what "Canadianism" is, and why something as unrelated as Cerebus is a truly canadian product.

Dave is a very "Canadian-canadian". He loves watching hockey, he loves the change of the seasons. He especially loves the snow. And he's not that fond of a really warm summer. His viewpoints on politics are from the angle of a Canadian, informed but wary. It seems to me that this book, although not plastered with obvious symbols like maple leaves and such is very canadian in feel.

Cerebus is always cautious and often quite cynical. But these are the things that help him survive. He is, after all, only 3 feet tall, and surrounded by 6 foot beings who could destroy him without being too upset by it. So Cerebus must be clever, not powerful, in order to come out even, let alone ahead. Which is also very canadian. A Canadian is someone who is running, just to stay where he is and feels accomplishment when he does so. He is a survivor. If you read Cerebus carefully, you will see that he too is a survivor. If he comes out ahead, it's never for very long. This issue is a good example of the survivor who knows all the tricks, never misses a beat or loses an opportunity. This, of course, is all hypothesis on my part. I'm not saying Dave is saying all this in Cerebus. I'm not saying he isn't either.

CEREBUS

Vol. 1 No. 25 **Feb. 1981**

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He looked at me as if I was crazy. Which is okay, since he was undoubtedly getting the same look in return.

"The safety is on," he said

"Please take the bullets out, because if you don't, I'm not staying. You've been drinking. I've been drinking. Bill has been drinking and I am not going to sit in a hotel room with two guys just as wasted as I am and a loaded handgun. Call it a phobia".

After much grumbling about wimp Canadians, he complied, opening the cylinder and clattering the bullets onto the table.

I had shot a rifle two or three times in gym class. Grade eleven. The first shot I took, I got a perfect bullseye. From then on, I was lucky if I ever hit the target.

I used to babysit at this one house when I was around fourteen, fifteen years old. They had a few guns up on the wall, including a revolver. I used to take it down and play with it a lot. Spinning the cylinder, cocking the hammer, pulling the trigger. Posing in front of the mirror. It was huge and I had trouble holding it with one hand.

So while Bill and Rick regaled me with horror-stories of trying to get into Canada with "a piece", of how Canadian customs agents ask you right off if you're carrying any kind of weapon registered or unregistered and confiscate it if they find it, I picked up the unloaded gun.

It was more than a little hypocritical, I thought, having just made such a fuss about taking out the bullets. It seemed a more manageable size that the one I used to play with while babysitting. Either it was a smaller gun or I had grown quite a bit --- probably a combination of both. I turned it this way and that, just checking it out from different angles. I opened it and checked to make sure the bullets were gone. Then I closed it and squeezed the trigger a few times. Click. Click. Click. Click. I thought, maybe I should get one. Deni and I live downtown. No telling how safe it is. Just one break-in is all it takes. Then I put the gun down and didn't think about it again.

A little more than a week later, Deni and I were watching television in the apartment. From outside came the sound of four distinct little explosions. We looked at each other and I thought right away about that Saturday night and the unloaded gun. We discussed it a bit and I said I hoped that some asshole hadn't decided it would be fun to fire a few rounds off his balcony. I was thinking of myself, when I said it. If I **had** decided to buy a gun for protection, how long would it have been until I decided just to fire one round off the balcony. Just one. I mean Deni's not home. I won't shoot **at** anything. I'll just do it to see how loud it is. See if it's like in the movies.

Okay, okay. Dumb idea. I won't get one.

A couple of nights later, we heard it again. Four gunshots.

Okay, God. I get the message. No gun.

I was working late in the studio about a week later, finishing up page sixteen of #24. I needed the name of a children's story for Charles X. Claremont to mention in panel three. An allegory that was really a complex spell. I lettered in "Blinky Boar" and tried to think of the second half of a title. For some reason I thought of "Strawberry Fields Forever" and lettered in "and the Strawberry Patch."

I think I was humming "Strawberry Fields Forever" to myself when the news came over the radio.

There's a line in the Stones song "Sympathy for the Devil" y'know? About shouting out "Who Killed the Kennedys?" Well, now, after all.

After all.

It was you.

And me.

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W6

Dear Dave, Deni, and Cerebus,

I have been an avid collector of comics and I have realized that most comic books are handled in a slipshod manner, with little regard to the plot and script. In the case of one sword and sorcerious hero you can, obviously, see that the writer just changes the name, place, and foe to be battled to create a new story. Fortunately, I run across this problem rarely. But a more frequent problem is the use of unrealistic scripts that make the characters speak in an abnormal manner to fill in holes in the storyline. But in spite of the sometimes annoying faults of comics, they still are my main source of entertainment and as collectables they sure beat stamps.

Until recently I have overlooked a wonderful facet of this media, underground comics and so-called "fan" publications. My first excursion into uncommercial comics was Elfquest, a truly great comic whose only problem is the rate at which it is produced. But that doesn't matter I'd wait as long as I have to to get an issue. Elfquest cured me of my doubts about the quality of such publications.

I discovered a recommendation of Cerebus in my Moondance catalog and my curiosity was aroused. So the next time I was at my local comic specialty shop, FantaCo, I bought a copy of issue eleven and I was amazed at its quality of art and humor. Panel four on page 6 had me laughing until my sides ached. I like few humor magazines and I was surprised when I found myself being compelled to buy every other issue available. I now have 6 issues and I haven't been disappointed yet. I am now shelling out sheckles to get issues of the adventures of my favorite EarthPig, sword swinging Cerebus.

It looks like I'm hooked on his stoic, cynical witticisms and charming personality. I can't wait to get my hands on the reprint of issues one through four. By the way, when are we going to hear more about it?

I hope Cerebus becomes the first comic in history to make it to 1000.

A Fellow Aardvarkian,
David Niles
16 Chaundray Lane
Averill Park, N.Y.
12018

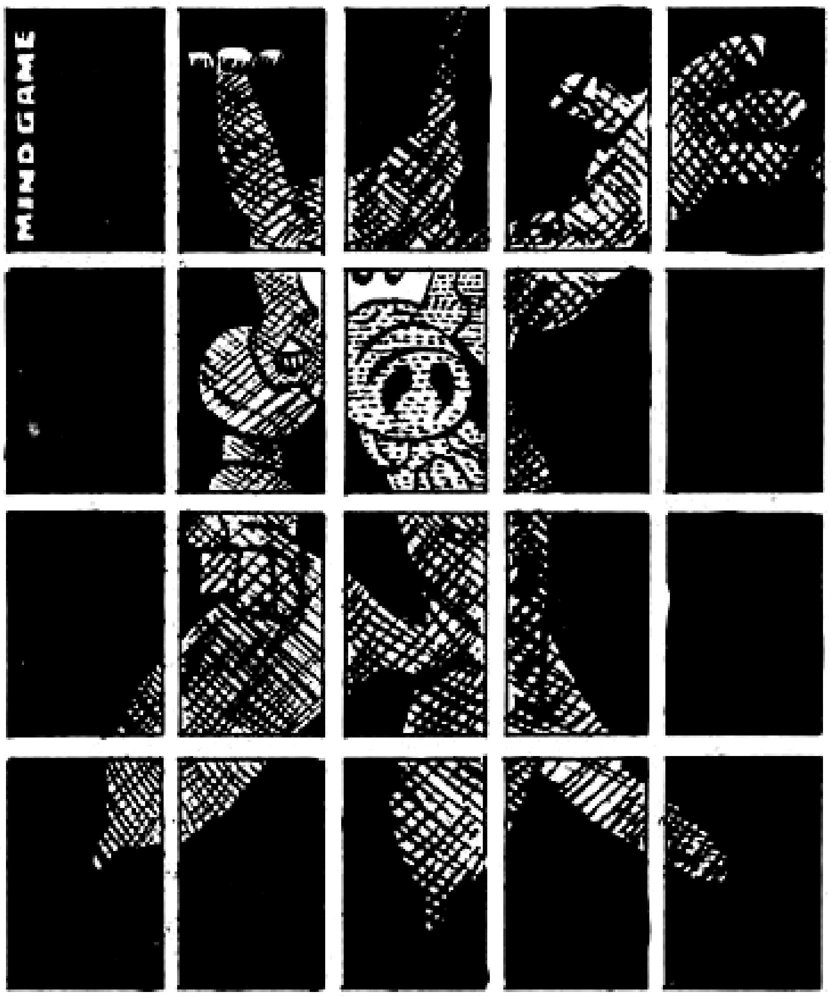
"Uncommercial" comics? I've heard a lot of names for it, but this has to rank as one of my least favorite . . . I think I understand what you meant, though.

Dear Dave,

I am a new fan of Cerebus. I went into my favorite comic book store with 2 of my friends. As they were looking at the latest issues of Elfquest I walked to the other side of the store. Then something caught me eye. It appeared to be "an aardvark wearing a furry black shirt" walking down some stairs with a guy that looked something like Groucho Marx (Issue # 16 to be exact). It looked interesting so I bought it. And I fell in love with the little guy. I love the writing and the art work. I heard something about a Cerebus book, is it true?

Your friend (and fan)
Dave Joplin
2104 N. W. 29th
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
73107

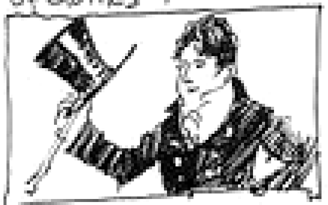
Many thanks for the kind words. Next time bring your friends to the other side of the store with you, okay?



GREAT WASTERS FROM HISTORY NOT COUNTING DAVE SIM.

No. 2. George 'Beau' Brummell 1778-1840 – the Single Page Version

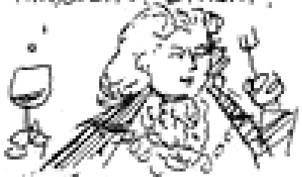
George was first and greatest of the 'Dandies' – a poet of cloth, a man whose life and work consisted in the wearing of clothes.



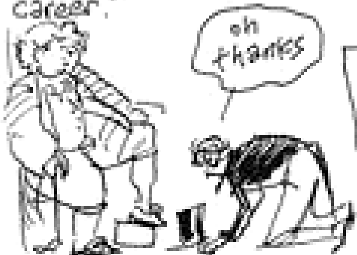
His old man was just a valet who by his obsequiousness was able to salt away a fortune ample enough to get George educated at Eton, then Oxford.

At Oxford George distinguished himself by the way he tied his cravat

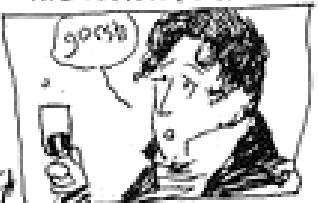
A skilled and witty flatterer, he wriggled his way into the best circles, where he came to the notice of the daffy Prince Regent, monarch of Britain.



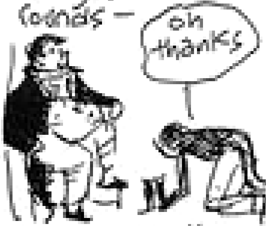
The Prince invited George to join the Royal Regiment, assuring him a splendid career.



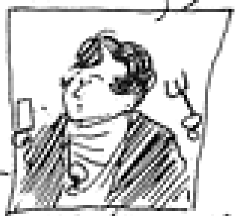
George wriggled out of the regiment when it was to be sent north to put down riots in the cotton mills.



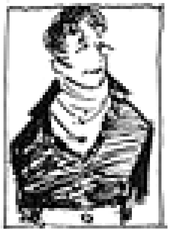
The Prince graciously understood how this would curtail George's social rounds –



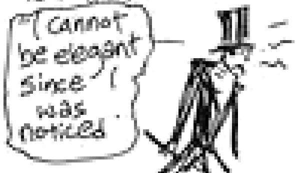
(Notice that 'Prinny' now dresses like our George)



George was a true original and introduced to fashion a total new concept of male elegance

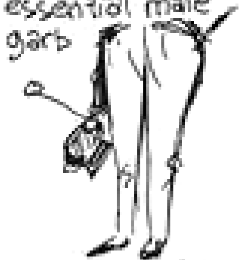


He meant to appear 'conspicuously inconspicuous'. When complimented on his elegance at Ascot he sulked and went home.

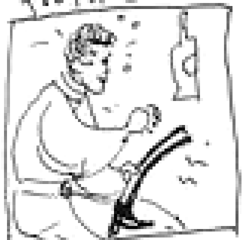

I cannot be elegant since I was noticed

He avoided all ornate jewelry, limiting himself to snuff boxes, monocles, gold-headed canes and matched fobs.

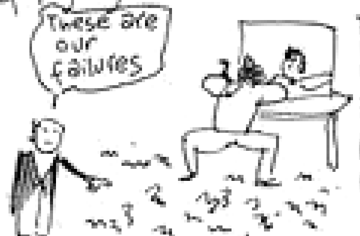
He made 'trowsers' henceforth the essential male garb



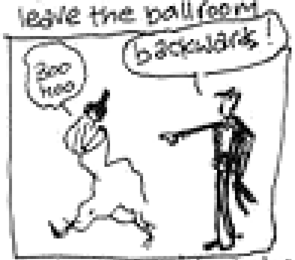
He'd buff up his boots with champagne froth –



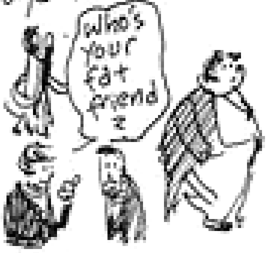
It's speculated that his mind first came unhinged in a mammoth session of trying to tie a cravat



When the rear view of a duchess once offended him he ordered her to leave the ballroom

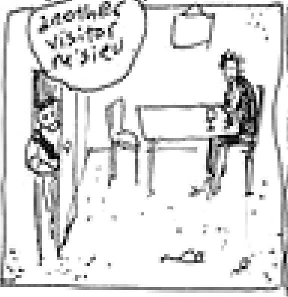


George cements his downfall with a social gaff against the Prince

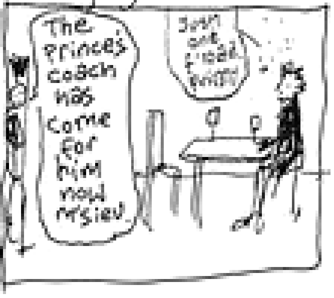

Who's your fat friend?

His creditors begin to lean on him and at age 38 he flees to France, the last recourse of all true wasters –

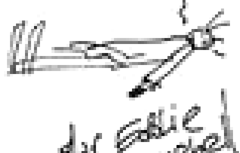
He lives for another 25 years in sordid poverty



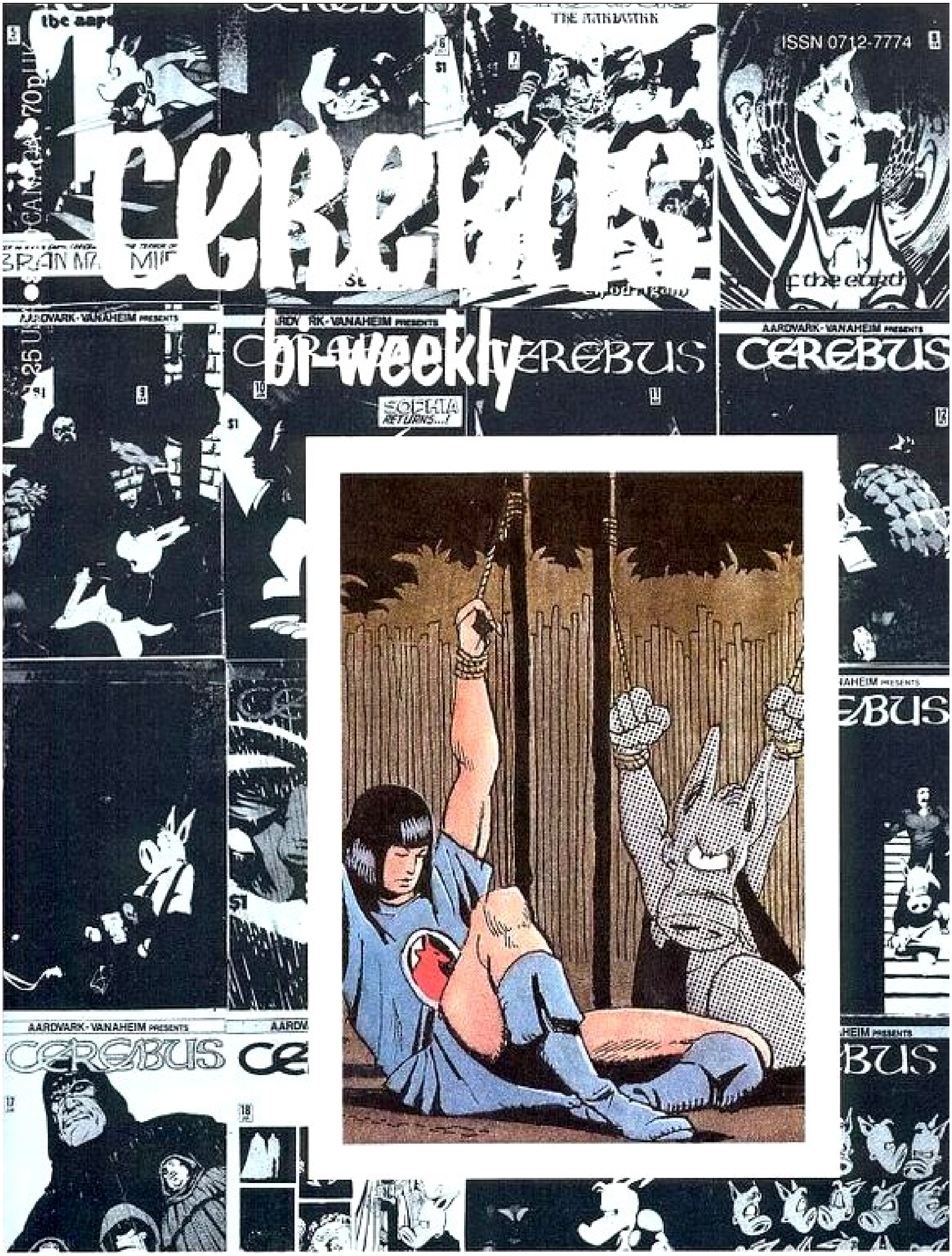
At the end, here he is receiving famous ghosts in a cheap lodginghouse in Caen.


The Prince's coach has come for him now m'sieu
Just one [illegible]

Somebody finally gets the 'daft bugger' home to England where he dies in the looney-bin, unmourned –



Eddie Campbell 89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ISSN 0712-7774
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CEREBUS
SOPHIA RETURNS...!
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CEREBUS

Cerebus Bi-Weekly #26 November 24, 1989

CEREBUS
bi-weekly

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MONIQUE KAPTEIN
Administrative Assistant

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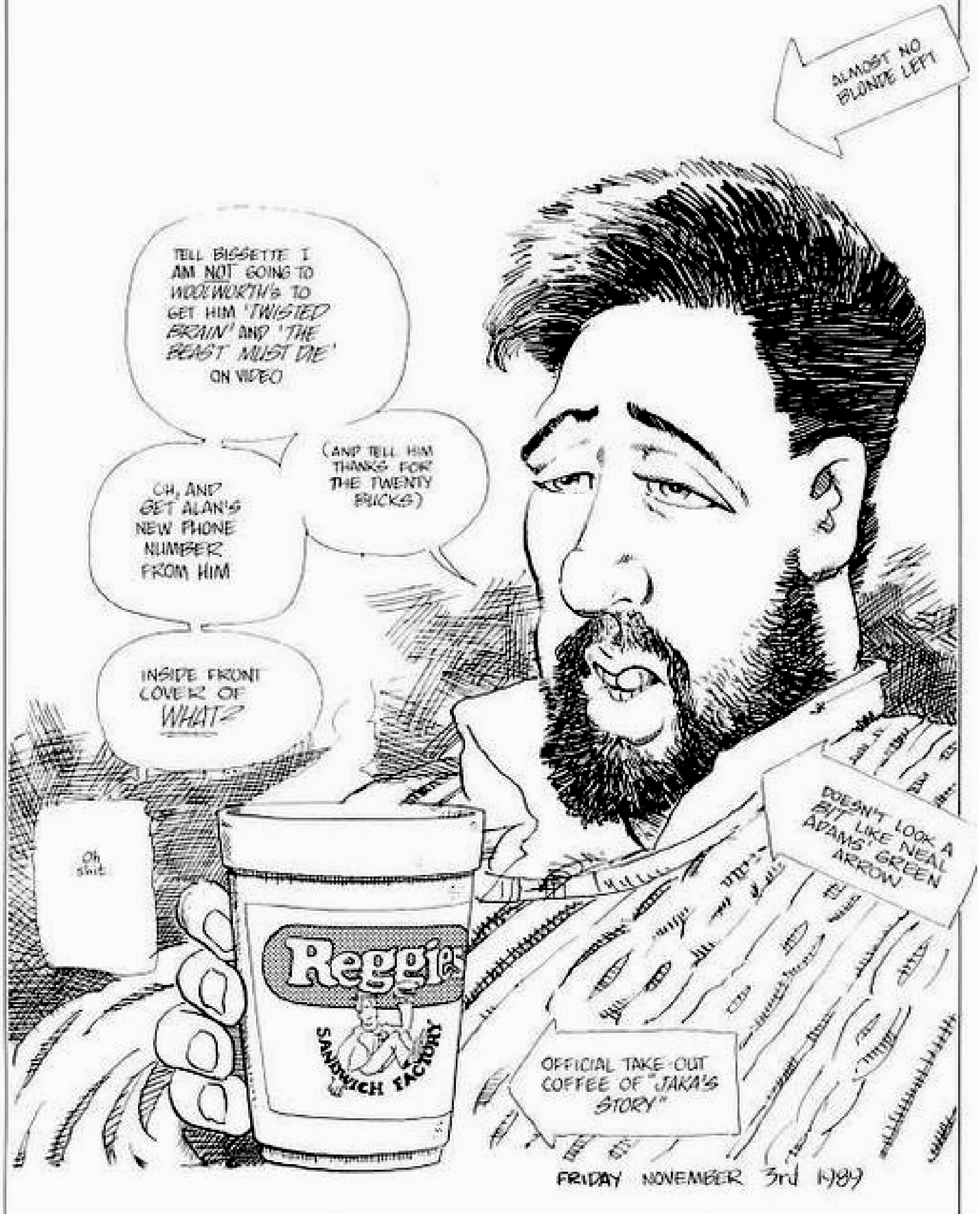
ALMOST NO BLONDE LEFT
TELL BISSETTE I AM NOT GOING TO WOOLWORTH'S TO GET HIM 'TWISTED BRAIN' AND 'THE BEAST MUST DIE' ON VIDEO
(AND TELL HIM THANKS FOR THE TWENTY BUCKS)
OH, AND GET ALAN'S NEW PHONE NUMBER FROM HIM
INSIDE FRONT COVER OF WHAT?
Oh shit
Reggies
SANDWICH FACTORY
DOESN'T LOOK A BIT LIKE NEAL ADAMS' GREEN ARROW
OFFICIAL TAKE-OUT COFFEE OF "JAKA'S STORY"
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 3rd 1989

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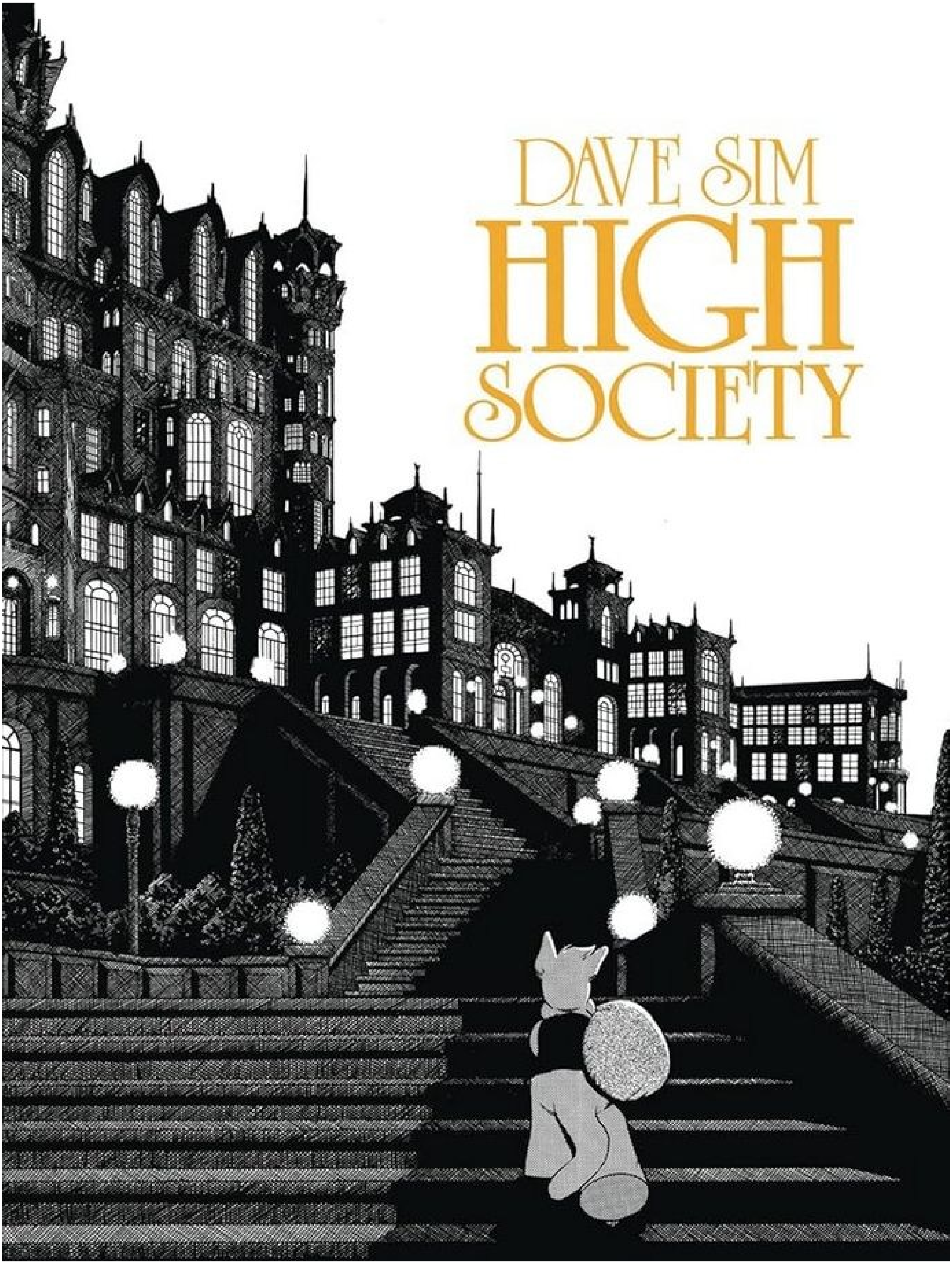

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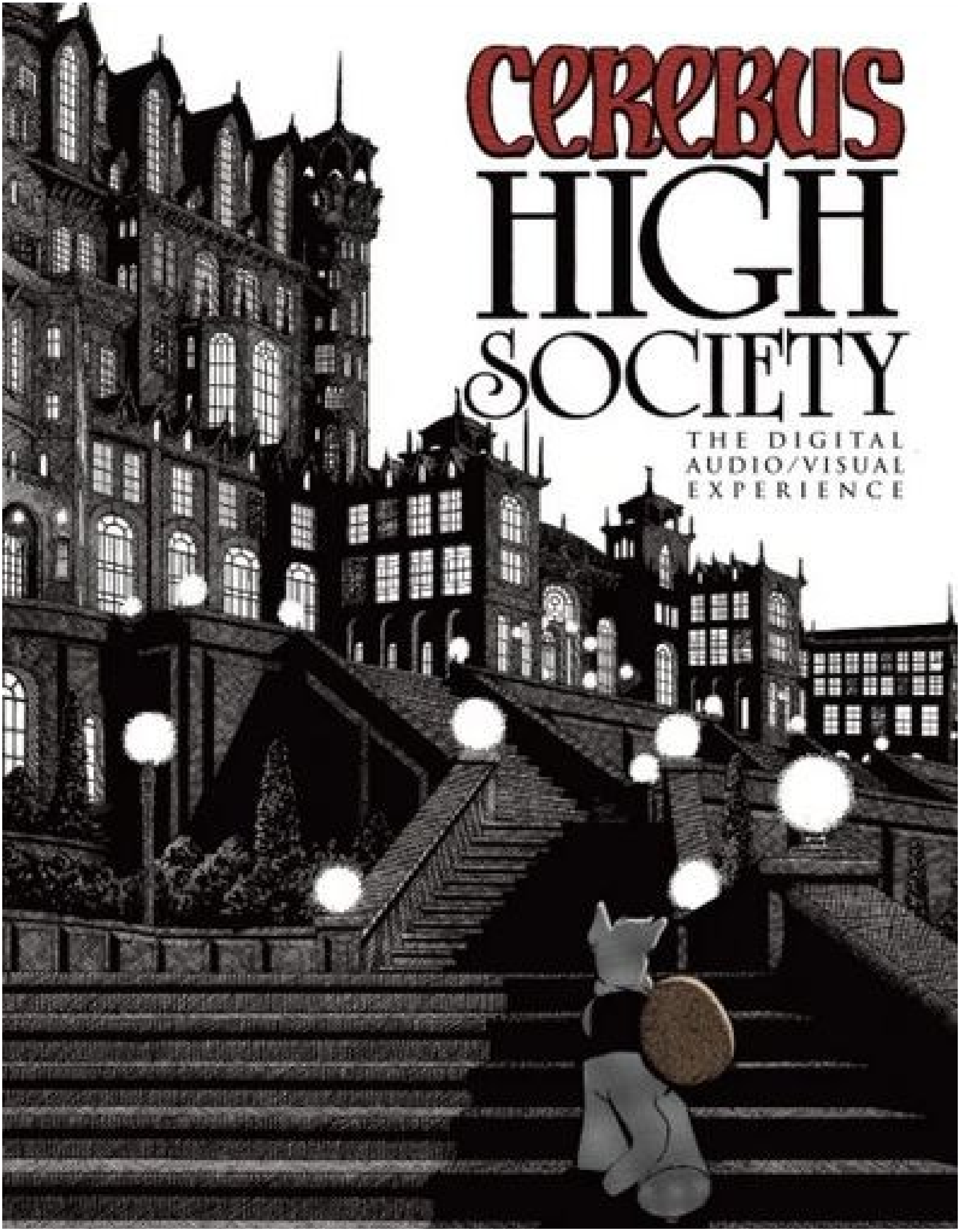
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Dave and Deni met December 16, 1976.
They married October 6, 1978.
Separated August 20, 1983.
Divorced August 1986.

All ads, contests, contact information
in the letters, ads and archive pages are null and void!
IT'S, LIKE, 30 YEARS AGO, EH?

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You can contact Dave at:

Box 1674, Station "C"
Kitchener, Ontario
N2G 4R2, CANADA
Phone: 1-519-576-0610
Fax: 1-519-576-0955

A Note from the Publisher

My note this time is going to be brief. I know I have promised this before, but this time I really mean it! I'm really happy with the mail we've been getting in the last two months or so. So many people have written in to say good things about Cerebus and I want you all to know that the mail is THE EVENT around here. We savour every good letter and fret and worry (especially Dave!) over every word of reproach in any letter. I hope that you realize that the whole idea of Cerebus is to make something the fans can really enjoy. So what you say about Cerebus means a great deal to us. We do it so you can enjoy it and because we like to believe that you are much more intelligent than what I feel some other publishers (I won't name any names) like to believe. So thanks for all the letters of encouragement and discouragement. We can't know what you think of all this if you don't let us know!! I'll see you next issue.

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 26 MAY, 1981

Publisher
Denise Loubert

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Culver City, California
90230
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If you want information on Cerebus (news, quotes, etc.) contact our Publicity Agent:

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AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S, #1401 - KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dear Deni:

Now that I've had a chance to read CEREBUS #23 which arrived yesterday, I'd like to offer a few comments on it and more on CEREBUS in general. I think this is your best issue yet. The cover, the interior art, the story -- all seem to be at a slightly higher level of quality than anything you've done before, though you may have had stories that were funnier or more dramatic. This seems to be the best blend of all the elements that go together to make a work really satisfying.

But -- on the whole, I agree with Dennis Summer's criticism on your letters page. I haven't felt strongly enough about this to comment on it before, but you've had a number of unsatisfying transitions from one plot to another, leaving too many points unanswered. I know that you consider CEREBUS to be a humor magazine in a superficially-dramatic format, rather than an actual adventure strip; but what counts is whether the reader feels satisfied with the way the story is presented, and the overall impression that several stories have left is that they were good but that they had a few very noticeable rough spots that should've been worked on more carefully. You yourself talk in this letter column about introducing coherent plots to comic book humor; these "cheap" transitions damage your coherence. (Besides, with all due respect, I think that Carl Barks has to be acknowledged as having regularly produced coherent plots in humorous comic books for many years. His classic DONALD DUCK and UNCLE SCROOGE stories such as "Lost in the Andes" and "The Golden Helmet" are certainly neither straight adventure strips nor theatre-of-the-absurd comedies.)

Twice now you've put Cerebus in command of mighty armies bent on conquest and then separated him from them & destroyed them offstage. (Issues 9 & 22.) The first time it was okay, but the second instance struck me as being both repetitious and an unsatisfactory resolution to the question of how Cerebus was going to handle his personal relationships with both the T'Gitans and with Lord Julius. In fact, in the letter column in issue 19 Dave said he wanted to make the T'Gitan assault on Palnu as realistic as possible, which led me to expect a really dynamic climax to that story after all the build-up to it was completed. Instead it's dismissed in a single offhand reference to an offstage event in issue 22. When I read that I frankly wondered whether President Weisshaupt was lying in order to retain Cerebus' services, and that Cerebus would eventually find himself still in time for the T'Gitan-Palnan confrontation; but issue 23 makes it look as though you really have finished with that story completely & are going on to something else. So even though the moment-to-moment action in the last several issues has been quite satisfying, I'm irritated that the Palnu adventure seems to have been abandoned rather than resolved.

I fully share Summers' feelings on your transition from #20 to #21. The complaint isn't over the transition itself --it's an excellent shock and I like shocks in my leisure reading -- but the fact that there's never any explanation for it. I like mysteries when they're solved at the end of the story, not when they leave major questiones unanswered. How and why did Cerebus get moved from Togith to Beduin? You might be able to come up with some snappy, humorous reply to this, but it'll take more than that to make me, the reader, feel really satisfied. Summers is right: whatever you may have thought you were doing, it looks like you just wrote yourself into a corner and took a cheap way out rather than really solving the problem of how to get Cerebus away from the Cirinists. And that cheapens the whole story.

As a reader I'm also unsatisfied with the way you've dropped Lord Julius from the story. Not over his being dropped, but the casual way that you've done it. If he'd just disappeared after issue 16, when Cerebus left Palnu, that would've been perfectly natural. After all, Cerebus is the focal point of the magazine and the reader wouldn't expect to see Lord Julius continue on stage after Cerebus moves on. But Lord Julius did continue on stage. For the next three issues you kept flashing back to him in "Meanwhile, in Palnu...." asides, which led your audience to expect that he would continue to be pertinent to Cerebus' adventures -- or that, at the least, we could look forward to an enjoyably exciting confrontation between Lord Julius and Lord Gorce for the control of Palnu. Instead this subplot seems to have fizzled out completely. I'm sure you haven't totally abandoned such a popular character as Lord Julius, and I won't be surprised if (to suggest one possibility) Cerebus eventually runs into him in exile and undertakes to restore him to power in Palnu. But that will be a new adventure. My whole point is that, as a reader, I had been looking forward with anticipation during the past few issues to a confrontation between Lord Julius and Cerebus with Cerebus as the commander of the T'Gitan horde, or to a confrontation between Lord Julius and Lord Gorce with or without Cerebus on the scene. Now I have a feeling of dissatisfaction over the way you seem to have just forgotten about this subtheme. It smacks of sloppiness rather than conscious planning.

I was also left with a feeling that there was something not quite right about Cerebus' abandonment of Weisshaupt at the conclusion of #22. Granted that Cerebus might be peeved by Weisshaupt's condescension toward him, he still seemed to have stronger reasons of self-interest to support Weisshaupt -- the offer of a comfortable position of power in Weisshaupt's cabinet -- than to let this opportunity disintegrate and become a lonely refugee. And, as I said, I was also left with a feeling of wrongness over the whole transition from #20 to #21; both over the unexplained nature of (& lack of reason for) that transition, and over the fact that it left Cerebus' relationship with the Cirinists and the Illusionists unresolved.

Maybe the problem is in me for wanting CEREBUS to be more of an adventure book and less of a humor book than it's intended to be. But these lapses of continuity seem to be due to poorly thought-out plotting more than to the fact that CEREBUS is supposed to be a humor magazine. I realize that Dave is doing a superhuman job of writing already, but if he can devote just a bit more seriousness to covering all the loose ends in a story, rather than feeling that they don't matter because CEREBUS isn't a serious adventure title, the result will be greater reader satisfaction.

Best,

Fred Patten
11863 West Jefferson Blvd.
Culver City, Calif. 90230

I concede your point on Carl Barks, only insofar as single issues go. With all do respect to you, I don't believe Barks had a coherent world-view of the imaginary characters he was creating that remained faithful to the previous issue's continuity (i.e. Donald Duck's sudden appearance as a Museum Guard in "The Golden Helmet" does not continue in the next story. Profession, disposition, environment and social status were manipulated from issue to issue as called for by the single issue plot. I try to maintain the reality from issue to issue. I enhance the reality, but I never arbitrarily change it for convenience sake).

"Mighty armies" is your phrase, not mine. The Conniptins were enthusastic, and within their own limited framework, probably quite an adequate army, but come on! Look at Iest (their ultimate target) as depicted in this issue. It's a city for heaven's sake. It would be like taking a band of snarky shepherds with good sword arms out of Scotland and racing south to lay siege to London. Ditto for the T'Gitans. It was a unique alliance that had been forged, largely by the diplomatic proficiency of Gudre, between several T'Gitan tribes. With the reduced troop strength reaching crisis proportion in Palnu and its territories, they had a very very small but real chance of making it to the city gates. They had an even smaller chance of getting inside, but who knows? Perhaps under cover of darkness or in the middle of a bad storm. The

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

introduction of the Lord Gorce character changed the whole complexion of the matter. The T'Gitans didn't stand a chance once he had all the armies he needed -- needed in the sense of decided over-kill. Gorce wasn't going to stop until he had the T'Gitans facing absolutely impossible odds.

This, of course, raises the question; What was I trying to accomplish? Foremost, I was using the armies as an illustration of Cerebus' complete lack of expertise in the area. You mistake the Earth-pig's enthusiasm (Essentially no better thought out than "Hot Diggety! A good scrap!") for cold, analytical strategy. This was a viewpoint I was trying to illustrate in recent issues; Cerebus' wariness of getting swept up into someone else's quarrel. Remember, he couldn't find any flaw in Gudre's plan, even though it was flawed to the degree that Lord Gorce made quick work of the T'Gitan hordes. He is learning to not trust his instincts when it comes to picking an army to fight with. His instincts in that area are not particularly good.

I'm afraid the letters page reference in #19 falls under the category of Dave Sim and His Big Mouth. I now avoid plotting my next few issues on the letters page. Suffice to say the emergence of Lord Julius' popularity as a character and a revived interest on my part in charting more of what conspires in the bizarre city of Palnu, made the whole idea of just filling the streets with corpses while T'Gitans sack the city unappealing in the extreme. Combined with the improbability of such an occurence (as described above) this made me shift the direction of the Palnu story onto a new tangent (this issue should give you an idea of how Palnu's impact on Cerebus' life continues).

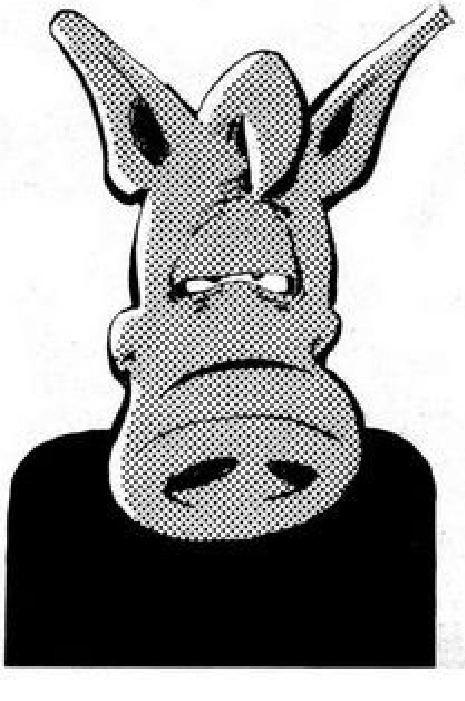
The problem of how Cerebus got from Togith to Beduin has already been worked out. I could explain it all here, but since it involves people you haven't met, disciplines I haven't touched on and power groups on the very fringes of Estarcion society that haven't nearly been revealed even fragmentally. I doubt that you would derive as much entertainment value from it as you will by just being patient and reading each issue as it comes out. How would you have liked it if I had revealed on the letters page in #14 that Jaka was Lord Julius' niece? Would have made the ending to #16 something of a clunker wouldn't it? The situation is comparable. Believe me.

Sloppiness, indeed. If I had signed an agreement with my fans at the outset of Cerebus' run, promising to wrap up every plot development within six issues, then I think you might have a case. To re-iterate -- I'm going to be doing Cerebus for another twenty-three years. I could have kept Lord Julius in the book long past issue #16. I think that issue (to use it again as an example) illustrates the kind of character I'm trying to develop for Lord Julius. His presence is all over this issue even though he never makes an appearance and is only referred to in the most general way. A power struggle between Lord Julius and Lord Gorce? Hardly likely. Gorce is a lightweight, suffering from the same myopia as Cerebus. The world of Estarcion is in the middle of a great social upheaval. There is great wealth and the rise of the merchant class is making all these chaps with the big armies something of the past. If Lord Gorce tried to wrest power from Lord Julius, he would be trying to buck the largest inter-related old-boy network on the continent. Lord Julius pays his armies well and his bureaucrats even better. And if Lord Gorce thought that defeating a bunch of uncouth barbarians from the north was going to win him power by acclamation, he was not facing the fact that virtually the whole population of Palnu is either directly or indirectly employed by the government. With Lord Julius' rotating bureaucracy (you can see someone else's experience with it in this issue's Scorz monologue) his chances of finding somewhere to drive the thin end of his revolutionary wedge were two-fold; slim and nill. The result is a paralysis on his part, but not a complete loss of influence. Like most of the rebels in Palnu he will be facing the dilemma of being independent and powerless or acquiescent and influential.

Weisshaupt was a millionaire nut. He is not unlike the current spate of 19th century conservatives who figure you can run a country like a corporation. Once his face was known and there was no hope for Elrod to assist in getting his activities sanctioned, he was only going one place; military jail and then the gallows. The Military Government of Lower Felda doesn't tolerate any movement from the private sector into their domain; governing. Cerebus had nothing to gain by staying with Weisshaupt.

The Cirinists are the most recent incarnation of the original matriarchal society that once dominated Estarcion. They have a foothold now that they have formed the revolutionary government of Upper Felda, but almost everywhere else on the map, they are either a grudgingly tolerated or rabidly persecuted minority. Likewise the Illusionists. The key word here is underground. Cerebus could be bumping into hard-core Illusionists and Cirinists every day and not know it. While for their part, the two groups will be having a hard time since issue #20 trying to find the Earth-pig. No matter how anyone tries to describe Cerebus physically to someone else, they never picture him looking like he does. Would you? For his part, Cerebus woke up from a bad situation and found himself out of immediate danger. What would you have done in his situation? Gone back to find out how you escaped? I doubt it. Look on issue #20 as an introduction to a whole new strata of Estarcion society seldom understood or even seen by the members of that society. His relationship to the two groups will emerge from time to time, but bear in mind that these are secret societies and an overkill on information is only going to hurt the credibility of the idea.

Above all, I would ask all of the readers of Cerebus to remember that Cerebus himself is trying to learn to adapt to a world not only he never made -- but one that very few individuals have managed to adapt to gradefully. His simple pursuit of money, physical comfort and frivolous pasttimes is becoming something of an albatross in the thriving new capitalism -- it becomes too easy for him to achieve his goals because his sites are set so low. The reaction at the moment is restlessness and a basic rejection of everything new in his new society. Whether Cerebus molds the environment to suit his needs or whether the society manages to change Cerebus (he hasn't slept in a tree since issue #5) is what I'll be exploring for the next two hundred and seventy-four issues. I hope you'll be here. Fred.



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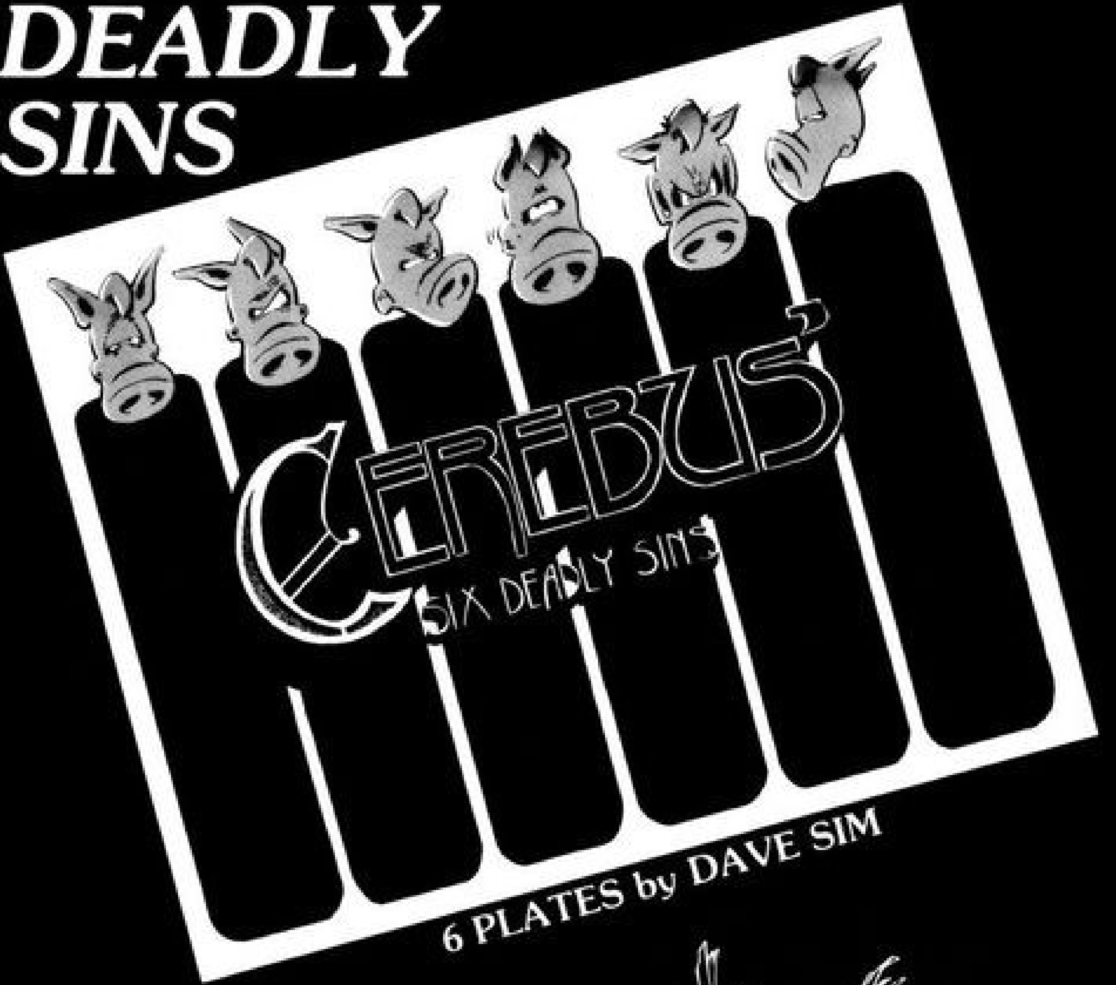
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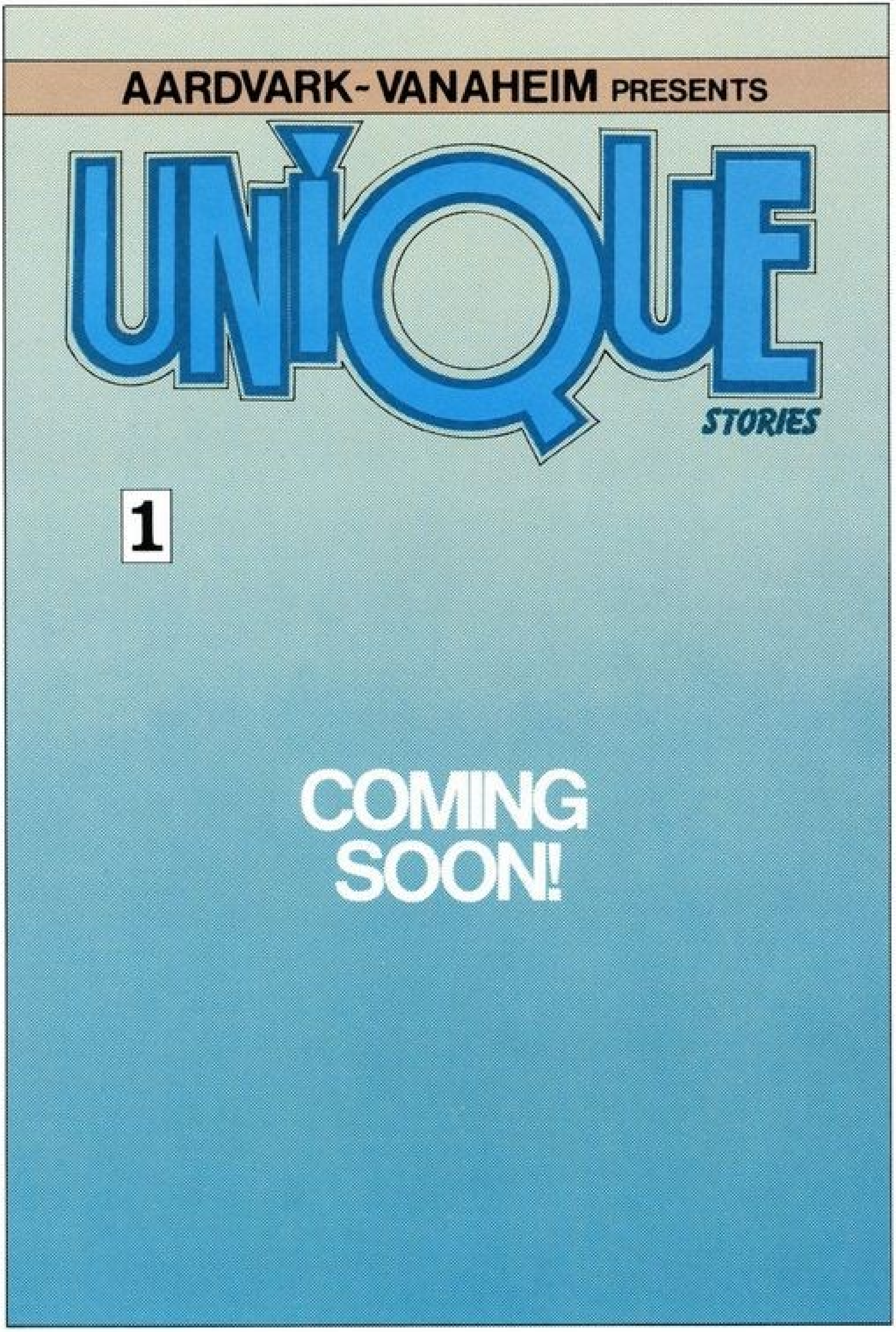

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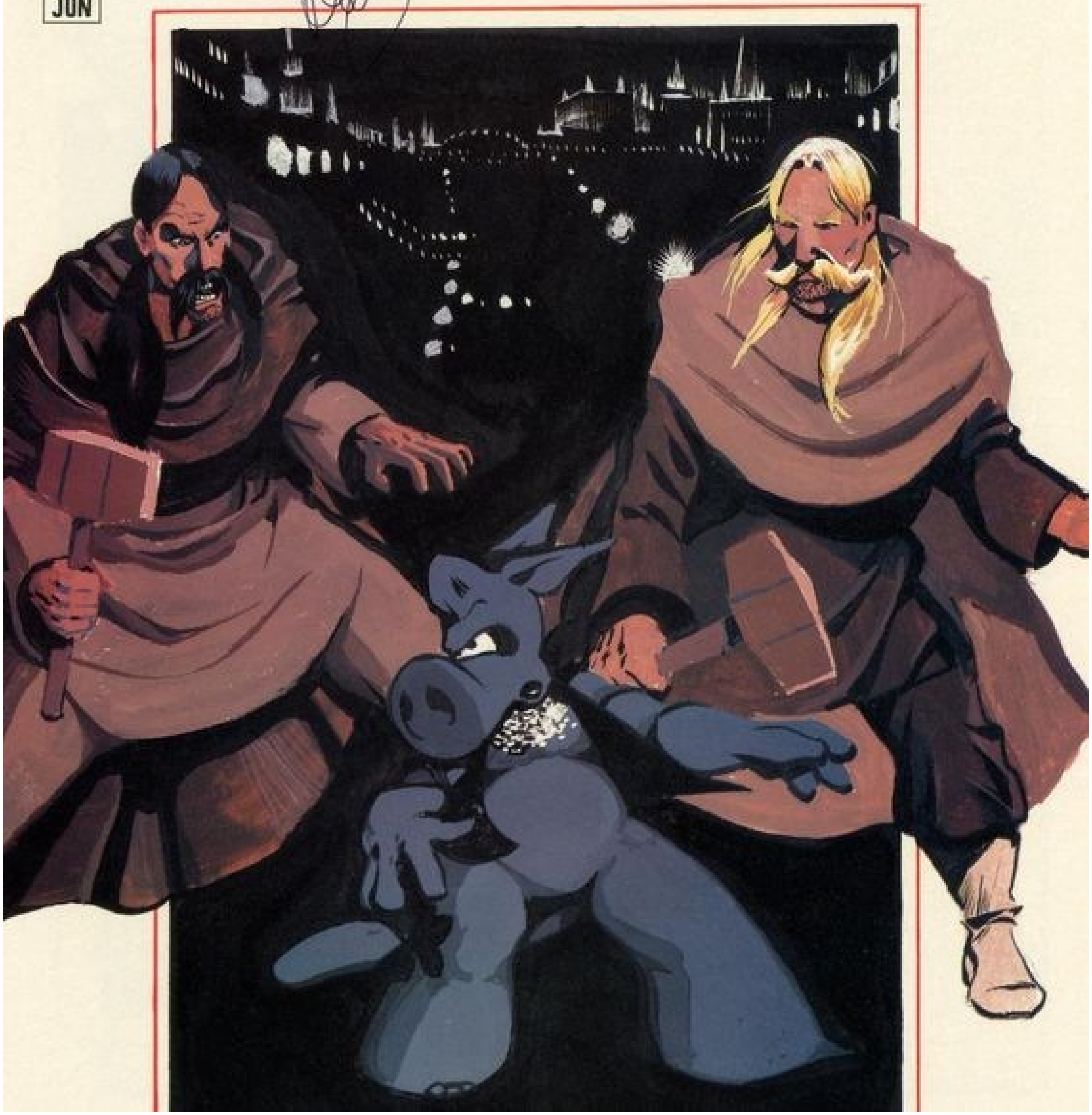

A Note from the Publisher

Hi again. This issue I have some news and information that I am long overdue to pass on to everyone. First of all, for those of you who are Cerebus newsletter subscribers, issue #2 and #3 are ready to go to press. If you haven't converted your subscription to Fan Club membership, now would be a good time. Dave worked hard on putting together a certificate that will go to each member. We are also working on a special membership card and a "Friends of Cerebus" button that will be available ONLY through the Fan Club. (The Cerebus Fan Club will hold its first official meeting at the San Diego Con in July, which Dave will be attending.) Going back to the newsletter, issue #2 will have lots of artwork (thank you to everyone who sent theirs in) and issue #3 will feature an interview that Dave gave last winter at a convention in Ottawa. Glenn Lisle (who did the interview) has been following Dave's work for quite some time and so the interview (which Dave later suggested be sent to the newsletter) goes into depth on some interesting points. If you are interested in getting the newsletter (it's part of the package when you join the Fan Club) please contact Fred Patten, his address is listed in the black box to the right of this column.

Also, for those of you who are budding journalists and would like to write up something on Cerebus and need information, please contact our publicist (address in black box to the right, also). We'd love to handle all of this ourselves, but then the book would never get done!!

Also in that little black box, you will see that we now have several distributors. These people are not only reliable but also are people who enjoy Cerebus and have made it possible for us to continue publishing.

If you are interested in carrying Cerebus or know of someone who is, they will be happy to help you out.

As you probably noticed on the back cover of last issue, Aardvark-Vanaheim is embarking on a new adventure!! Our new title, "Unique Stories" will feature in its premiere issue the work of Toronto's Arn Saba. His strip, "Neil the Horse", has been a favorite of Dave's for a long time. I fell in love with his simple style from the first time I saw it. We hope that you enjoy it as much as we do. Doing Cerebus was a big chance for us, it was so different from all the other stuff we saw around, but Dave has always felt that comic fans were ready for something new. We are again stating that with "Unique Stories" and ask that you give the artists we showcase in it a good serious look. I'll be looking foward to hearing from you when it comes out this fall. See you next issue!

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 27 JUNE, 1981

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Denise Loubert

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If you want information on Cerebus (news, quotes, etc.) contact our Publicity Agent:

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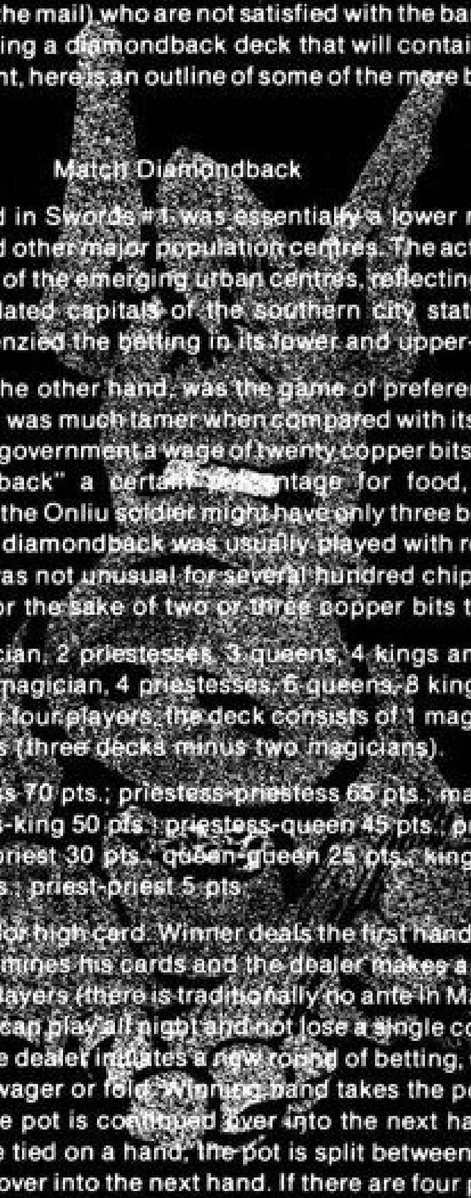


WHILE CEREBUS IS SHUFFLING At the time that I did the "Diamondback" story in ***Swords of Cerebus*** #1, it was my intention to provide only the barest details of the game as I imagined it; enough to keep the casual reader from feeling completely lost in the proceedings. There are a lot of you out there (judging by the mail) who are not satisfied with the barest details. Sometime in the future, we will be producing a diamondback deck that will contain rules for most of the major variations. For the moment, here is an outline of some of the more basic rules in the Onliu variation;

Match Diamondback

KARET, the variation described in Swords #1, was essentially a lower middle class variation popular in Lower Felda, Iest and other major population centres. The act of ***doubling*** the initial wager was, in fact, a peculiarity of the emerging urban centres, reflecting the concentration of currency in the densely-populated capitals of the southern city states. The more money available in a city, the more frenzied the betting in its lower and upper-middle class taverns.

MATCH DIAMONDBACK, on the other hand, was the game of preference among the stingy military personnel of Onliu, and was much tamer when compared with its metropolitan cousin. Onliu soldiers were paid by the government a wage of twenty copper bits a month, out of which they were required to "kick-back" a certain percentage for food, lodgings and other necessities. As a consequence, the Onliu soldier might have only three bits left for betting after his expenses were paid. Match diamondback was usually played with representative chips of varying denominations and it was not unusual for several hundred chips to be bet in a marathon game over several days for the sake of two or three copper bits that they represented.

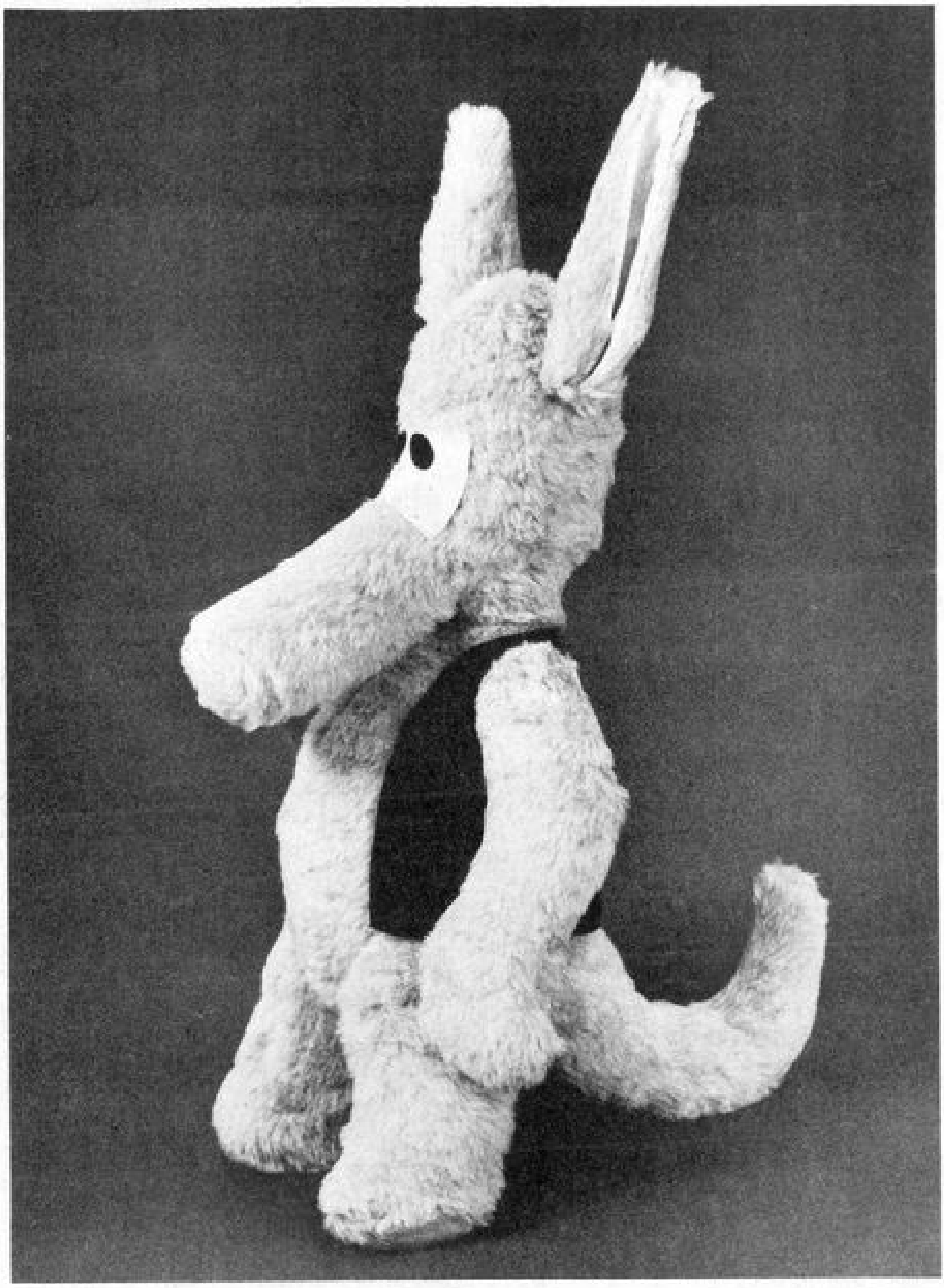
THE DECK consists of 1 magician, 2 priestesses, 3 queens, 4 kings and 5 priests. For three players, the deck consists of 1 magician, 4 priestesses, 6 queens, 8 kings and 10 priests (two decks minus one magician). For four players, the deck consists of 1 magician, 6 priestesses, 9 queens, 12 kings and 15 priests (three decks minus two magicians).

THE HANDS magician-priestess 70 pts.; priestess-priestess 65 pts.; magician-queen 60 pts.; magician-king 55 pts.; priestess-king 50 pts.; priestess-queen 45 pts.; priestess-priest 40 pts.; queen-king 35 pts.; magician-priest 30 pts.; queen-queen 25 pts.; king-king 20 pts.; queen-priest 15 pts.; king-priest 10 pts.; priest-priest 5 pts.

THE GAME begins with a draw for high card. Winner deals the first hand, two cards face down to each player. Each placer examines his cards and the dealer makes a wager which must be matched by each of the other players (there is traditionally no ante in Match Diamondback. A player who folds on each hand can play all night and not lose a single coin). Each player then exposes one of his cards and the dealer initiates a new round of betting, each player choosing whether to match the dealer's wager or fold. Winning hand takes the pot. In the case of a tie between two players' hands, the pot is continued over into the next hand. If there are three players in the game and two are tied on a hand, the pot is split between the two players. If all three are tied, the pot is carried over into the next hand. If there are four players in a game and two players' hands are tied in points, the pot is split between the two tied players. If three or four players are tied in points, the pot is carried over into the next hand.

THE MOST UNIQUE FEATURE of Match Diamondback is the rule that the game must continue until a majority of the players involved agree to end it. (In a two-man game, both would have to agree, in a three-man game two would have to agree and in a four-man game, three would have to agree.) Very often another soldier would be asked to hold the contested coins in trust until a game was decided. "Coin-men" were responsible for organizing the closest approximation of a banking system ever to evolve in Onliu's loosely-knit military society, lending coins held in trust, fencing loot from military raids into neighboring countries, etc. It was not unusual for a game to drag on over several months, since a player leaving the game before a consensus was reached forfeited his winnings.

The Official Cerebus Toy



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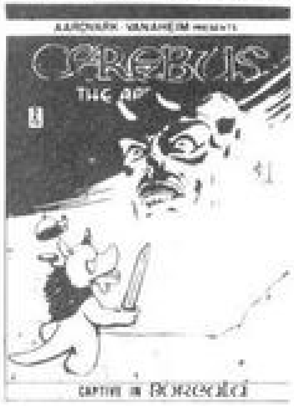
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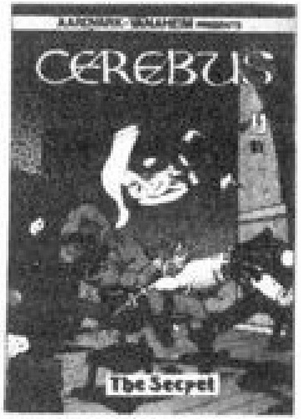
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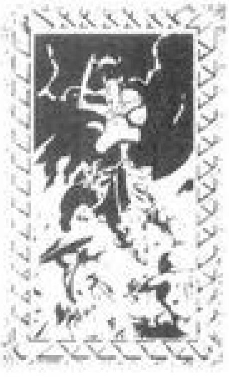

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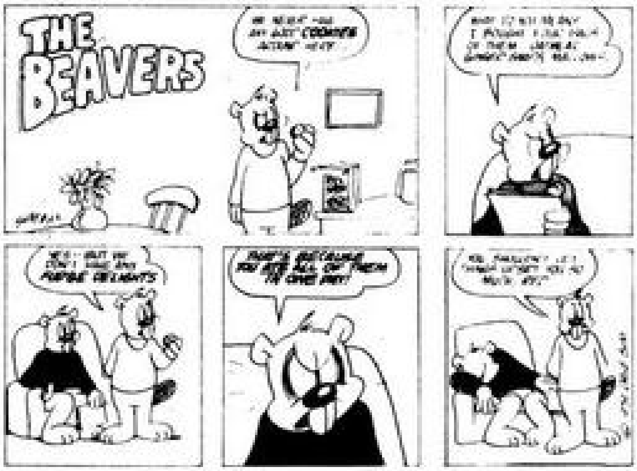
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AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

To Dave Sim:

Aha! I see your plan! In Cerebus #19, shown in only three panels was the true founder of the Cirinists -- the black cat! This fact is especially pleasing to me, for I am ardently devoted to cats. In fact, for five years now I have been seeking innovative and sadistic ways to neuter cats. (I have found 236). Now I'll bet that in a future issue you'll show a flashback scene where a great ancestor of mine -- born in Cerebus' time -- gives a certain black cat quite a traumatic experience. This induces the cat (whose name, of course, is Cirin) to form a fun-hating sorority (the Cirinists), with the character Wenda being VICE-President. Am I glad that I took those logic classes in school!

Sincerely,

Joseph Szabo,
56 Dorset Dr.
Clark, NJ 07066

Go to your room.

Dear Dave:

You printed a letter and picture of mine in Cerebus #24. The photo was of my "nameless younger brother" in a Cerebus costume, remember? Since the publishing of that picture, two things have happened: First, I have been riding the high of having a letter pubbed in my favorite mag (Thank you) and, second, my brother is no longer speaking to me. At first, I was enjoying the latter development, but now it has become downright annoying. He is an iron-willed nine year old, so this could go on for months -- even decades!!! Therefore ... I beg you ... I beseach you ... Please print his name! Just write Ted Christian. You don't even have to write anything else! Thank you!

Incidentally, I loved #s 23 and 24. "Prof. Charles X. Charemont" is brilliant as is "Woman-Thing". In my last letter I asked for more parody and you're sure giving it to me! I especially enjoyed the girls' tales of heroism. By now, I'm sure many loyal Cerebus readers have surmised that Katrina is Jaka's sister. The inevitable second meeting seems to be drawing closer, and I, for one, can't wait! Fight! Fight! Fight!

Jeff Christian
13 Peppermill Rd.
Chatham Twp, NJ 07928

Ted Christian

Dear Fellow Aardvarks,

I am a new Cerebus fan. (Starting with issue #21) I would like to congratulate you on making such an excellent comic. Just a few questions: 1) What's wrong with the president's ankles? (Not Reagan). 2) What's the CHEAPEST price for Cerebus #1? 3) How about a satire on Iron Man? 4) Is there going to be a Swords of Cerebus #2? 5) What ever happened to Elrod and Captain Cockroach? (Or is he still making sure that the drapes don't eat the house-plants?)

Enclosed is a picture of the many faces of Cerebus and I'm working on some more paraphenalia. I hope you keep on making Cerebus until #5000.

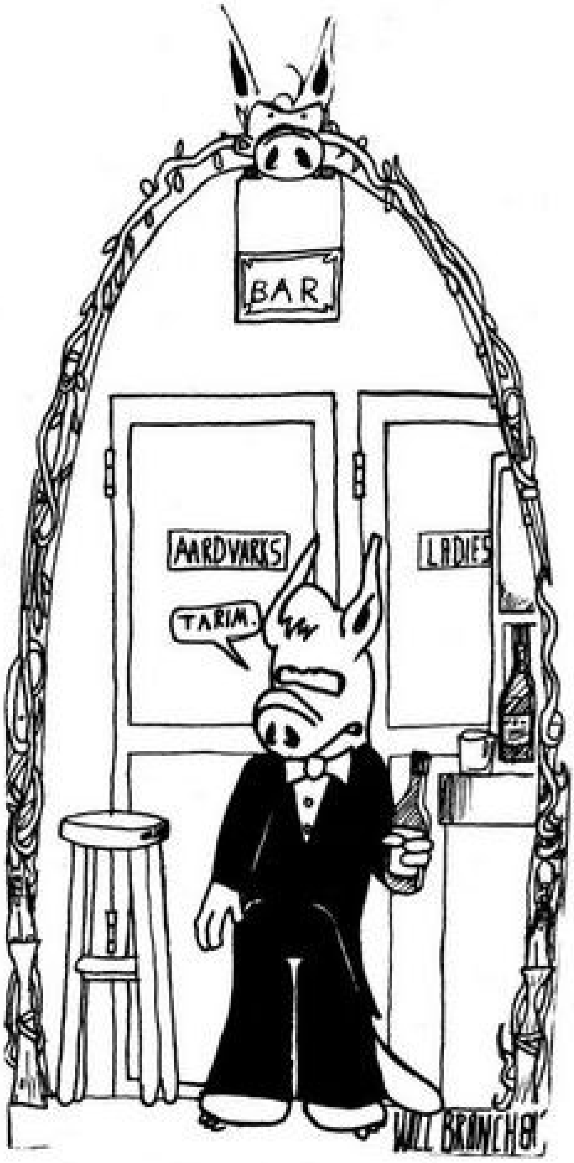
Sincerely,

Will Branch, Age 10
2101 E. Kensington Blvd.
Shorewood, WI 53211

1. We haven't gotten to that part yet. 2) $50 the last I heard of Two sold for that amount at Now & Then (Hi, Harry). 3. No 4. Yes This month. 5a. Not too much actually. b) Yes. I hope you keep on reading until #300. (Will's impression of Cerebus appears on this page).

Dave:

I recently began reading Cerebus and a few things pop into mind. Especially after the most recent issue, number 23. (Down here in Georgia, that IS the most recent issue. We get things slow.) For one thing, what is the aardvark culture like? After all, there must be other aardvarks around. Do they have a civilization? Are they barbarians? Nomads? Pirates? Itenerant street cleaners? Or just wandering aardvarks with nothing to do? Did Cerebus ever have a girlfriend (of the earth-pig persuasion)? It seems to me that he must have been attracted at one time to a lady aardvark (if there are lady aardvarks -- we don't know that till you tell us about the culture) -- perhaps he began his wanderings because of a broken heart? (The earth-pig is a lot more sentimental than he lets on. He is the least cynical cynic I have seen in a



"Will Branch's drawing of an Estarcion bar where aardvarks are aardvarks, ladies are ladies and men just have to hold it in."

AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER - ONTARIO N2G 1W5

long time.) Are there other non-human sapients around? Wombats I suspect, due to a recent letter column, but what else? (I'll accept anything but ducks. I am tired to death of ducks.) Foxes, bears, platypuses, diplodoci? Huh?

Also, I understood that there was supposed to be an anthology and a magazine called "Swords of Cerebus" out. Well, I can't get them. Most annoying.

Oh, by the way - I also include an advanced Dungeons and Dragons outline for Cerebus. The one mentioned in 23 was inadequate for my campaign. Also, I see him as such:

Dungeons and Dragons Specs for Cerebus the Aardvark:
Strength: 13 Class: fighter/thief Level: 11/10
Race: Aardvark (High) Intelligence: 13
Alignment: Neutral (tending to good) Wisdom: 12
Dexterity: 17 Constitution: 18
Charisma: 17/14 (depends. He's an odd one.)
Hit dice: 11 Hit points: 71 +2 attacking creatures man sized or larger, as they tend to underestimate him.
Weapons: short sword, buckler, dagger
Movement: 10" Armor: class 5 Price: $1.50

Darn. You had to raise it, I suppose, but still...

Hope this version of the Cerebus D & D character pleases you, as well as Mr. Iverson. I put Cerebus' constitution so high because he has survived a hell of a lot of titanically torturing punishment on various occasions, and his wisdom as low as I did in view of the many impulsive acts he has performed (for example, the "Kick the Driver" incident mentioned in 23). Also, I added dagger as it seems to me that I remember him using one once. Ah, well, I have to go finish studies for a final and write the next almost - deathless chapter in the adventures of my sf hero that I spend all my time writing about knowing it will never be read (it isn't my serious stuff) and wish I had an illustrator -- Hey, Dave -- you want the opportunity of a lifetime?

Sincerely,

Robert S. Haynie Jr.
Lunatic at Large (or medium)
Box 31304 Tyus Hall
West Georgia College
Carrollton, Georgia 30118

No. (Note from Deni: I think Dave's "no" is an answer to all of the questions.)

Ahem:

Okay. So you printed my stupid little comment in your latest (#23) issue. Fine. I've had stupid little comments of mine printed before. I don't mind. What I DO mind is the comma you placed after my name. Why on earth did you do that? (And don't be sly and try to weasle your way out of this sticky situation by filing it under "Human-Fucking-Error".) Do you realize the amount of anxiety you've caused me? I've been getting strange phone calls in the middle of the night from equally strange people who insist on telling me "comma jokes" and laughing at me. While people have always laughed at me, I find comma humor particularly annoying.

And while I'm picking your nits, I have one more complaint: your dialogue. It's totally nonsensical. As I've just finished reading a Superman reprint digest, my mind is oodled with examples of really wonderful Comic Book Talk:

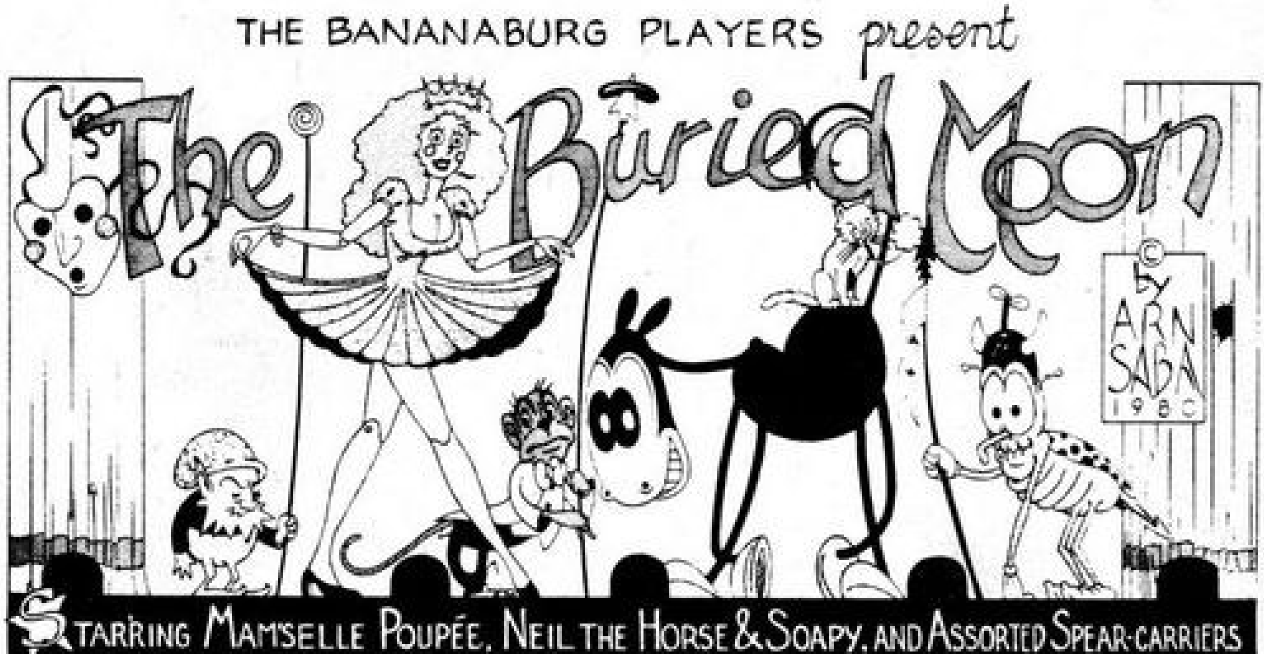
"It was good helping out my alien friends in this star system."
"Obviously ANOTHER faker."
Great Galloping Galaxies."
"I'm blacking out..."
"Earth can't get along without Superman."

If you could fit these into your next issue, then I'm sure it would be quite swell.

Mike (No Commas!) Bannon
(And I'm Not Signing My Address)

P.S. Could you give me the phone number of Michael Fleisher's lawyer? I'm thinking of suing you.
P.P.S. Am I kidding, or what?
P.P.P.S. Wouldn't you rather get no fan mail at all than letters like these?

Suing me? Great Galloping Galaxies -- Earth can't get along without Superman. Letters like these? Obviously ANOTHER faker. I'm blacking out...I find Superman dialogue is just perfect for answering crank letters. Krypto! What is it, boy?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MIND GAME II

A Note from the Publisher

Here I am again. This issue I helped out a bit with Aardvark Comment. When reading through all this months letters at one sitting, I got a very strong over-view. Most of the lengthier letters have the feeling of reading a review. Are you sure some of you guys aren't harboring secret hopes to write reviews for the Comics Journal and are just practicing on us? It certainly reads that way. I apologize if your letter isn't in this issue, but we had a good month for letters. Considering the mail strike is just starting up here, it will probably help to have a few left over in case we don't have any mail coming in before the next issue. Also, I try not to put the same people's letters in every issue, so if you write often you aren't going to get every letter in the book. But we do read every letter and I am making an effort to try and write back to everyone who does write to us. I'm sorry that Dave doesn't have the time to personally answer all your questions, but he does have a monthly schedule to keep. Drawing Cerebus takes up almost every minute of his time.

I'm getting a little nervous about going to Chicago for the convention there. I'm hoping it won't show up too badly while I'm there. I've never tried going to a major con on my own (well I did in New York, but that wasn't planned that way). Dave seems to think I'll do fine once I get there, so I guess I'll just take his word for it.

A personal note to Tom Kempton in Atlanta: I've lost your return address somewhere, Tom, so could you drop me a postcard some time? Thanks.

Also, for those of you who were confused with my previous comments on the newsletter, here's more .... You cannot get the newsletter except by becoming a member of the Cerebus Fan Club. If I sound like I'm blowing my own horn, it's just that Fred informed me that I had kinda confused things the last few times, so I'm hoping this will straighten everything out. If this is still confusing, I would suggest that you contact Fred Patten at the address given on the right in the black box. That's about it for now. See you all next issue!!!!

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 28 JULY, 1981

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Denise Loubert

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If you want information on Cerebus (news, quotes, etc.) contact our Publicity Agent:

Robert W. Rittinger
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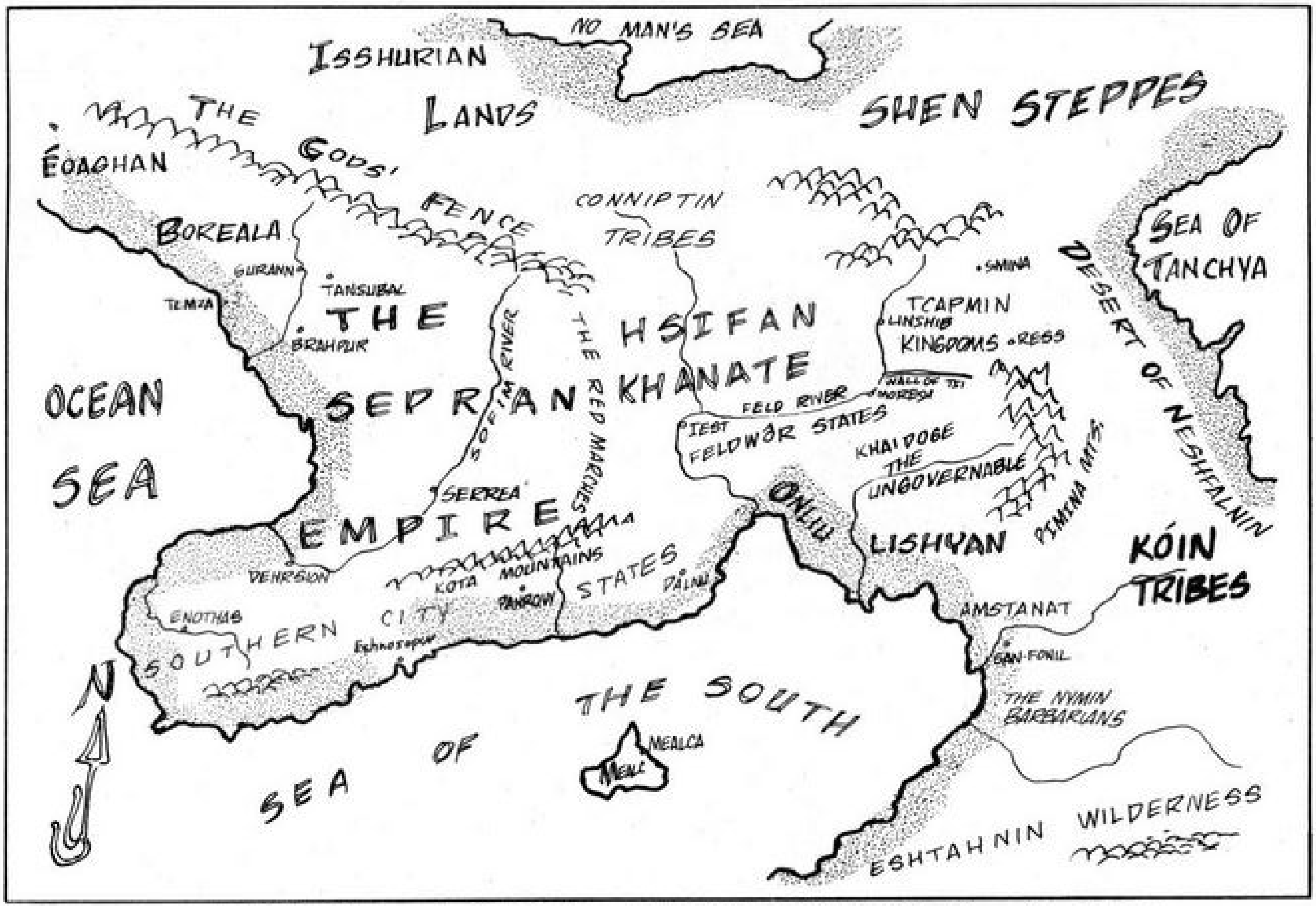

NO MAN'S SEA
ISSHURIAN
LANDS
SHEN STEPPES
THE
GODS'
FENCE
ÉOAGHAN
BOREALA
GURANNA
TEMZA
TANSUBAL
BRAHPUR
THE
SEPRIAN
EMPIRE
OCEAN
SEA
CONNIPTIN
TRIBES
SOFIM RIVER
THE RED MARCHES
HSIFAN
KHANATE
SEA OF TANCHYA
DESERT OF NESHFALNIN
SMINA
TCAPMIN
LINSHIB
KINGDOMS
RESS
WALL OF TEI MORBISH
FELD RIVER
TEST
FELDWØR STATES
KHAIDOGE THE UNGOVERNABLE
PIMINA MTS.
ONLIU
LISHYAN
KÓIN
TRIBES
SERREA
MOUNTAINS
KOTA
PAHROW
STATES
DÁLNI
DEHRSON
ENOTHIS
SOUTHERN
CITY
Eshnotopia
AMSTANAT
SAN-FONIL
THE NYMIN BARBARIANS
THE SOUTH
SEA
OF
MEALCA
MEALC
WILDERNESS
ESHTAHNIN
N

THE AARDVARKIAN AGE

DESIGNED BY MICHAEL LOUBERT

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Raed Evad dna Ined,

I haven't written your fan letter yet, so I'm doing it now. I have been shamed into it by Deni's announcement of the hundreds and hundreds of other fan letters you've got lately. Your new covers look very nice, both inside and outside. By the way, can you please tell me if you (either of you) are left-handed. I know Cerebus isn't, but the crazy person whose name I forget who appeard in "Swords Against Imesh" was. I am myself, so I would like to know. Also, while I am scribbling this all down in the hopes you can understand my writing, I must tell you how much I liked the artsy person in "This woman, this Thing". He must have some of the best facial expressions you've ever drawn. May I ask if you've ever satirized any Canadians? I can't remember any, though I might be wrong. This would perhaps tie in with the theory that Cerebus is representative of our fair country, as advanced on the inside cover of issue No. 25 or 26 (I can't remember, but it was one) in your edititorial.

So now that I've got Dave convinced that he's a cross between God and Pierre Trudeau, I have a request. On looking over Michael Loubert's map in an old issue (is he the one that calls himself Clovis, by the way?), I noticed there is a small island in the Sea of the South called Mealc. If it is possible, could you sometime tell a story about Cerebus's adventures in Mealc? It strikes me that the people there would be a sea-going race, and as you can see from the return address, I am from an area that gets off on stories like that.

Your maritime friend,

Thomas Lorimer
RR2 Musq. Hbr.
Halifax County, Nova Scotia

I can't say for certain when Cerebus will reach Mealc. To date, it has only been mentioned once: in No. 27 by Dirty Fleagle. Watch for Cerebus' adventure on one of the many lost islands in the Sea of the South in Swords of Cerebus, Volume Four.

Dear Dave & Deni,

About this, ... uh, aardvark. You know, the little guy with the one piece grey tux?! What was his name? .... Cerebus? .... yeah! that's it! I'd just like to say one thing ... WOW! GREAT!! SENSATIONAL!!!

Cerebus has got to be one of the best-put-together publications since Elfquest. The stories are wittingly original and very, very funny. Along with the great artwork, they make a spectacular team.

I picked up my first Cerebus (No. 13 & 14) three days ago. I now own issues number eight and eleven to present. I will also be sending for back issues as soon as my funds stabalize again.

In the mere moments it took me to read those first few issues, I have transformed into an avid aardvark. There will always be room in my heart for a little grey furry pig ... earth born! As much room, as a matter of fact, as there is for the Wolfriders (just a little friendly competition), of WARP Graphics born. Elfquest will always be no. 1 with me but look at it this way .... Cerebus will always be no. 2 and you guys (meaning Elfquest and Cerebus) beat out what I call production-line comics (Marvel and DC). That's doing pretty good considering "you" only have one title to choose from and "they" have a whole list! I'll be writing again.

Sincerely,

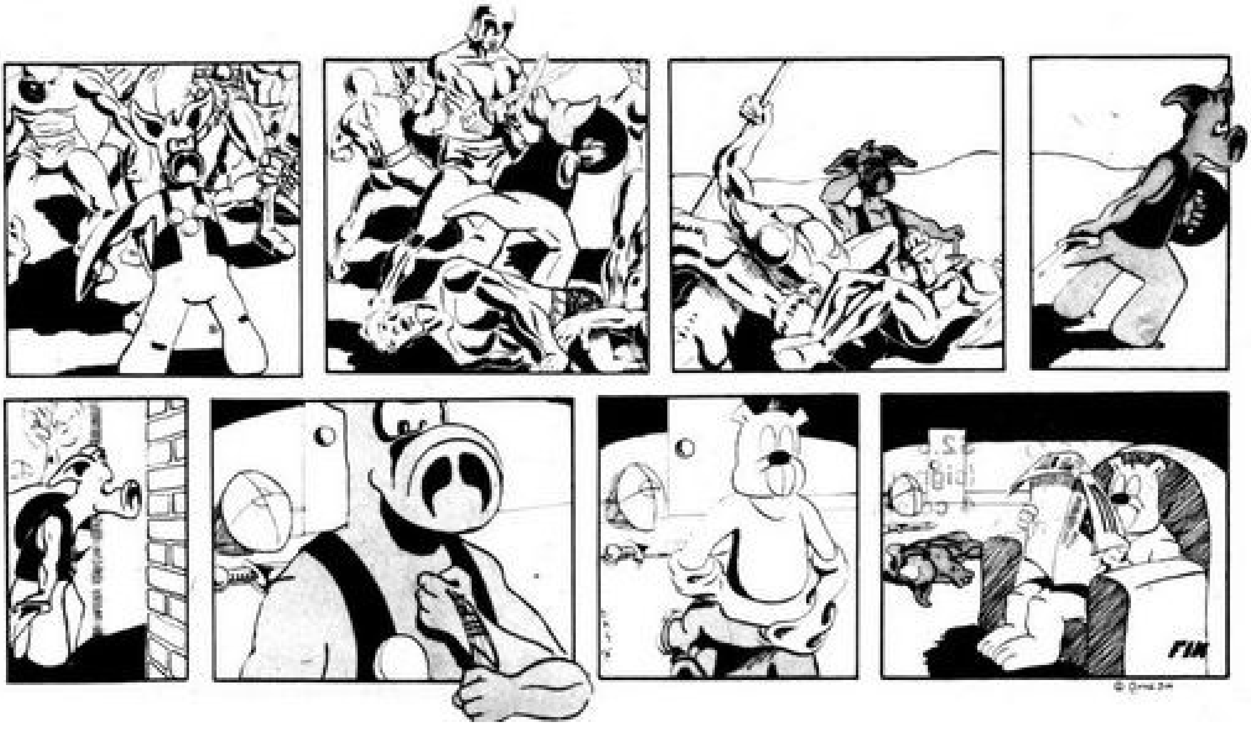
Ed Herman
6317 San Pablo Dr. #228
Citrus Hts., CA 95610

P.S. Cerebus No. 20 was the best. Do another one like it in about a half a dozen issues or so.

I hope some conscientious Cerebus fan will now write and tell Wendy that they think Cerebus is number one, but Elfquest will always be number two (just kidding, Wendy). (ha ha ha?).

Dear Dave, Deni and Cerebus,

Thank you, thank you, thank you! What you've accomplished is nothing short of miraculous, let me tell you. It all began when I picked up a copy of **Cerebus** No. 22, the first comic I've bought since I sold my collection to my younger brother lo, these many years gone by. Something in this small furry creature struck a strange chord in my psyche. I had to know more about Cerebus!



AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

So far I'm only five issues shy of a complete set and have purchased two (count 'em, two!) copies of **Swords of Cerebus**.

I'm thanking you for finally giving me a comic I could respect, one with that almost-unheard-of combination of quality art and brilliant writing (even if your capital "P's" **do** always look like "D's") which this unfortunate world usually only sees between the covers of Eisner's **Spirit** books. But even more, I'm thanking you for giving me some insight into my own gradual metamorphosis. Shortly after reaching the age of twenty I began to shrink, growing slowly but noticeably shorter. I've also noticed that my thought processes, while not actually impaired, have been growing more, well, **basic**, lacking my former philosophical subtlety. I find myself fascinated by gold, wine and good food. I've ALWAYS had a foul temper. I seem to be growing stronger. I've started to sprout a light grey fuzz all over my body, and my normally upturned nose seems to be getting longer and thicker.

As I'm currently 23, I figure it won't be too long before the tail begins to grow and my ears get long and pointed.

And so this, Dave and Deni, could be the explanation for where Cerebus came from. Every now and then some genetically superior, apparently human, being gradually metamorphases into a small fighting aardvark. If my guess is right, the change should be finished in about three years. You'd better watch the aardvark jokes **then!**

Keep up the good work,

J. Clifton Swinford
(A.K.A. Ingrim the Half-vark)
950 Lake Front Road
Lake Oswego, Oregon

P.S. to Cerebus: You'd better just stay in your own aardvarkian age, because all the gold in **this** one is MINE! — Ingrim —

The evidence continues to mount that reading comic books can induce long range mental problems the scope of which we are only now beginning to recognize.

Dave,

I want this on your conscience: you are driving an avid fan of yours, ME to be specific, absolutely crazy. Before you throw this letter in the trash, let me explain. I love **Cerebus**. It's a better comic book than any I've ever read. But it's been driving me up a wall these past few months. It all goes back to issue No. 20. Yup, the weird one. In the last couple of issues (No. 21-24), you've got a number of letters in Aardvark Comment on that issue, some of them from other professionals in your field, all of them full of praise. In the smashing review of **Cerebus** in the latest **Epic** (every word of praise was richly deserved, I might add), Jo Duffy mentioned the issue as "noteworthy". Everybody is talking about your innovative use of simple black-and-grey backgrounds, your skilful manoeuvering of the aardvark's pose and expression, etc., etc., etc. Either nobody sees the issue the way I do, or they all do and aren't mentioning it as part of a mass conspiracy to send me to the funny farm. I was reading along when I noticed that Perce, who in issue No. 19 was pretty much established as a harlot, had suddenly become a faithful, established member of a religious cult so prudish it makes the Roman Catholic Church look like a **Playboy Club**. A couple of things weren't making sense. Then I noticed the art: "Wait a minute, if you visualize the pages consecutively in 4 rows of 5 .... holy shit! Maybe Suentus Po **is** dead! This is all going on in Cerebus' head! ..... MINDGAME!!! Jesus, can't wait to see the next issue!"

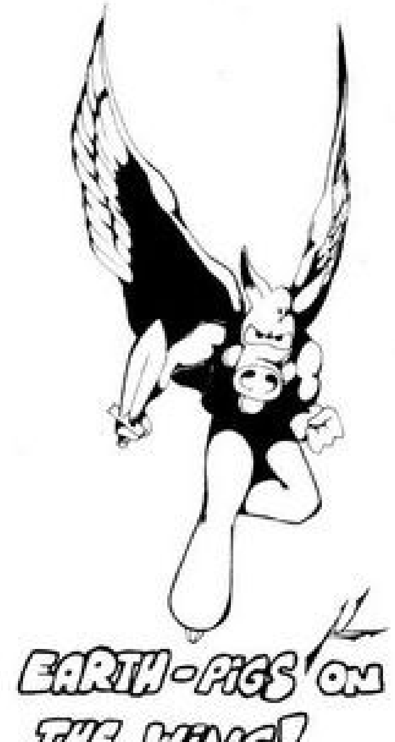
The next issue. Cerebus is in Beduin (assuming issues No. 21-24 haven't been just a continuation of Cerebus' drug-induced dream.) WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED? Why did Perce drug Cerebus, and what happened afterwards? For about four months I've been anxiously awaiting the answers. They have not arrived. In issue No. 24 you mentioned that it might be a really time-consuming hassle to relate what went on in that interval. Please, Dave, for the sake of this man's sanity, fill in the picture. You want money? I'll rob a bank. I'll rob a comic book shop. I'll kidnap Cheryl Tiegs and send her to you in a Rolls-Royce. I'll have my left lung removed. In case you hadn't already gotten the idea, I really want to know what went on there. Save me from a straitjacket.

Jim Wilon
11027 Marcliff Rd.
Rockville, MD 20853

This issue is intended to shed a little more light on the subject of the Cirinists, the Illusionists and whatnot. Having read it, are you a little less confused? Mmmmm. I didn't think so. Keep reading.

'Lo there!

My story starts late one nite. I was awakened by the sound of Pink Floyd still playing on my stereo -- hold it! I had turned off the little ole stereo before I went to bed! Curiosity compelled me to turn on the light. It was at that time I became aware that it was playing Animals and the song was ... Pigs on the Wing. As my eyes became accustomed to the light I noticed that my Cerebus collection was on top of my Animals album jacket. What happened next I can't fully explain, but a strange creature emerged and began to fly around -- I quickly sketched what I saw, it was an earth pig on the wing!! (The sketch is in this envelope somewhere.)


EARTH-PIGS ON THE WING!

P.S.S. I was gonna say "What can you say about Cerebus that hasn't been said." But somebody said that already. So just put all the good stuff that people said together add a few "Awesomes" and that'll be my comment. (This writing is sorta squdged up because I'm in between studying for a french test -- ulg!)

Norman Felchle
64 E. Mission
San Jose, Ca.

P.S. P.S. (Whatever that is) When are you going to do a Cerebus portfolio?

Thanks to Norman for an interesting representation of Cerebus.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

29
AUG

$1.50

A Note from the Publisher

This issue I'm going to talk about a few things. The first one is concerning something I probably should have brought up before on this page. Dave and I, you understand, make our living doing Cerebus. What I mean is -- this is *all* we do to earn our living. We work hard at it. Therefore, when I hear of people who use something Dave and I have worked hard on and they make money off of our work -- I'm not too happy. I'm talking about bootlegging. You know, t-shirts, buttons, even playing cards. And the two things they have in common is they all have Cerebus on them and they all aren't sanctioned by us, so we get nothing, (Not a penny) from them. You've probably seen them, maybe bought one yourself. Maybe you make them and don't see the harm you're doing. If you're doing it and not even letting us know it -- is there a reason? The people who do the "Cerebus for Dictator" t-shirt are the only official t-shirt producers. It isn't that they make us a lot of money, but they did respect Dave enough to write to him and tell him what they'd like to do and offer him a percentage of their sales. I don't think that's asking too much.

If you want to do something for your club or your group, that's fine. Where we draw the line is on profit-making ventures. If you've got something you think will interest other Cerebus fans, and Dave agrees, there is no difficulty in sanctioning any given product. We will even assist in getting you the widest possible market for your Aardvarkian doo-dad. Contact us first, though.

On to more pleasant things.

Along with this issue, I am finally bringing the art for the Diamondback cards to the printer. Before you jump up and shout, though, I will warn you that paper has to be ordered and delivered and there are umpteen dozen strikes going on in Canada, so the cards may be delayed a few weeks.

The retail price for the black and white cards (the backs are done in four colour) should be somewhere around three dollars per box. Anyone who joined the Fan Club at or before the 1981 San Diego Comicon will get a free set of the cards as part of his or her membership. Join today before you miss the next freebie!

One last note before I crawl into bed for the night (she crawled into bed an hour ago, this is Dave typing from her scribbled notes). Dave and I will be in Albany in September for FantaCon. It's September 18th and 19th and we hope we will see you there!! Catch you next month.

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 29 AUGUST, 1981

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AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Thanks to a national postal strike and the resultant shortage of intelligent letters, Dave Sim wishes to announce a Formal Padding of the Letters Page, (tie optional) to commence below with the Wit and Foolishness of Mike Bannon of Dubuque (give me a "D") Iowa. Take it away, Mike:

Dear Deni:

Thank you for your letter and comment about my letter and comments on the book. Your letter will be appearing in my top desk drawer as soon as I straighten it out. I hope that you will continue to enjoy reading my letters.

Sincerely,
Mike Bannon,
Nobody in Particular

And then Mike wrote:

Dear Dave:

This might be a silly question and perhaps I'm a mad fool for asking, but can Cerebus play the harmonica?

Mike Bannon,
2453 Martin Drive,
Dubuque, Iowa
52001

No, Mike, his snout keeps getting sucked into the little holes when he breathes in. Two. Three. Four. But seriously....

David, Deni:

Hmm....in Cerebus #26 you devoted the entire letter column to Fred Patten's thoughtful thoughts concerning Cerebus. And Deni's editorial/note stated "We savour every good letter ... so what you say about Cerebus means a great deal to us ... we like to believe that you are much more intelligent than what I feel some other publishers (I won't name any names) like to believe."

And you mean to tell me that you have the *nerve* to print one of *my* letters?!?

Thoroughly frumpled,

Mike Bannon,
2453 Martin Drive,
Dubuque, Iowa,
52001

P.S. Never mind about the harmonica ... what I *really* want to know is if Cerebus can juggle oranges and tap dance on hard-boiled eggs!!

Isn't he wonderful ladies and gentlemen? He'll be back later in the show. Thank you, Mike....

Dear Dave,

I just wrote to say congratulations for issue #23. The cover is *beautiful*. A great improvement over the reproductions of earlier covers.

About the "Swords of Cerebus" which I first heard about last summer from you...I think that some issue(s) should contain the stuff you did for *The Buyer's Guide*. I never was able to get these anywhere. So my personal collection will be incomplete until *someone* reprints them. Please do it.

I'm interested in a Cerebus cover. I'm the guy who bought Cerebus #1 page 1, which hangs over my desk, where sits my sketch of Cerebus, down the hall from my Cerebus poster. I'm interested in the cover to #25. Although I've yet to see it, I have this thing for issues that are multiples of twenty-five. This is caused by growing up with comics, you know. If that isn't possible, my next choice is #15, if it isn't already sold. Otherwise please send me a list of what is available (with prices!)

Now, when are we going to find out about Palnu? You *can't* just leave us hanging forever. I want to see Cerebus lick Apricot Brandy from Jaka's navel. And Lord Julius is too fine a character to abandon like that. *Resolve the storyline!*

Please....

You know I wish I could think of some constructive criticism. But Cerebus is so consistently the best. Keep it up. Some day there may be a sprawling Aardvarkian comics empire. You deserve it.

Steve Hendricks,
415 S. Chauncey #6
W. Lafayette, IN
47906

I shant resolve the story-line, I shant and you can't make me, you...you... villain! Tell ya what I'm going to do, Steve. If you send me the original art of the Cerebus Quixote drawing from the second issue of the newsletter, I'll send you the preliminary thumb-nail paintings of the cover to issue #25. That's the best I can do until I decide whether or not I'm going to sell any of the painted covers. What's the next book in the series after Cerebus the Freelance Photographer?

Dear Dave and Deni:

After having read 24 issues of Cerebus, I felt I had to write. I originally bought issues 15 and 16 out of curiosity, then went back the same night and bought 17-22, and ordered all available back issues that week. With my copy of Swords of Cerebus, I've read all 24 issues, and have nothing but praise. I love the stories, the satire, the action, the art, and above all the humor. Cerebus is the only writing that consistently makes me laugh out loud (embarassing at times) since Spike Milligan and the Goon Shows. Congratulations on a terrific job.

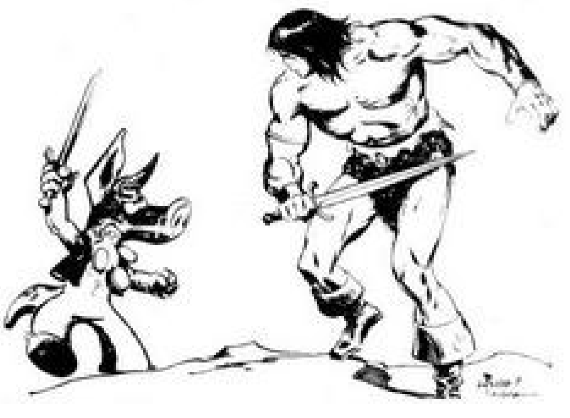
As insightful as most of your fan letters seem, however, I'm surprised that no mention has been made of your obvious involvement with the Illuminati. The "eye in the pyramid" in 15; "President Weisshaupt" (the George Washington Look-alike) in 22; "Cerebus" - 7 letters; when added to "Aardvark-Vanaheim" we reach the mystic 23, summing to five; the clues are everywhere. I know *They* may think I'm paranoid, but look around. They're everywhere!!! AArrgghh!!

I've enclosed a copy of an original piece I had Alfredo Alcala do for me of Conan vs. Cerebus. Hope you enjoy it. Hope to meet you sometime and have a real "Sim" Cerebus done...Will you be at the San Diego Con?

Thanks again for a great comic.

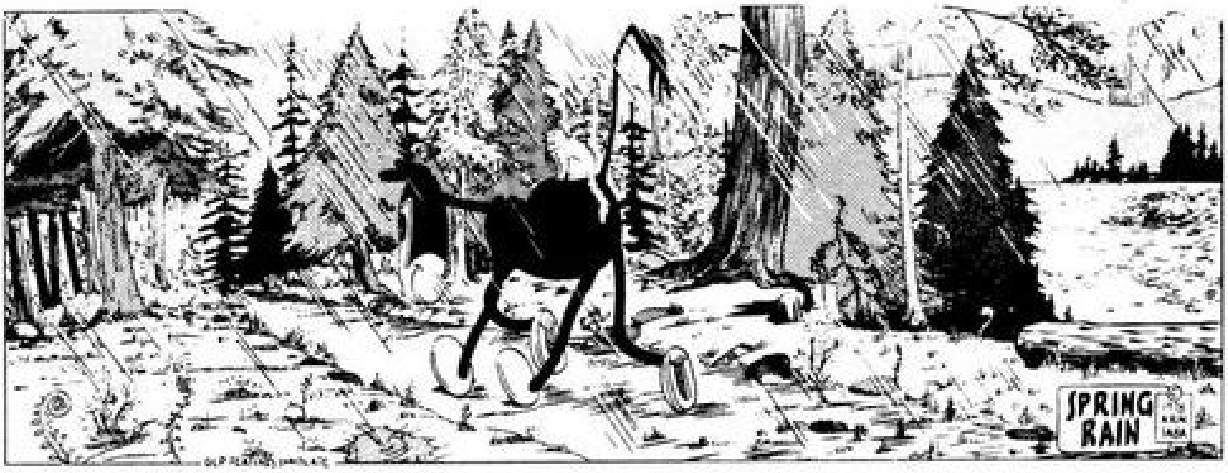
Glen McFerren,
2505 "A" West Curie,
Santa Ana, California
92704

Glen got his original "Sim" sketch (I grew the quotation marks on my last name especially for San Diego) at the con. Elsewhere reprinted on these pages is the sketch Glen mentioned in his letter. Wasn't that nice of Glen, everyone? Everyone say, "Thank you, Glen and Alfredo." One, Two, three....

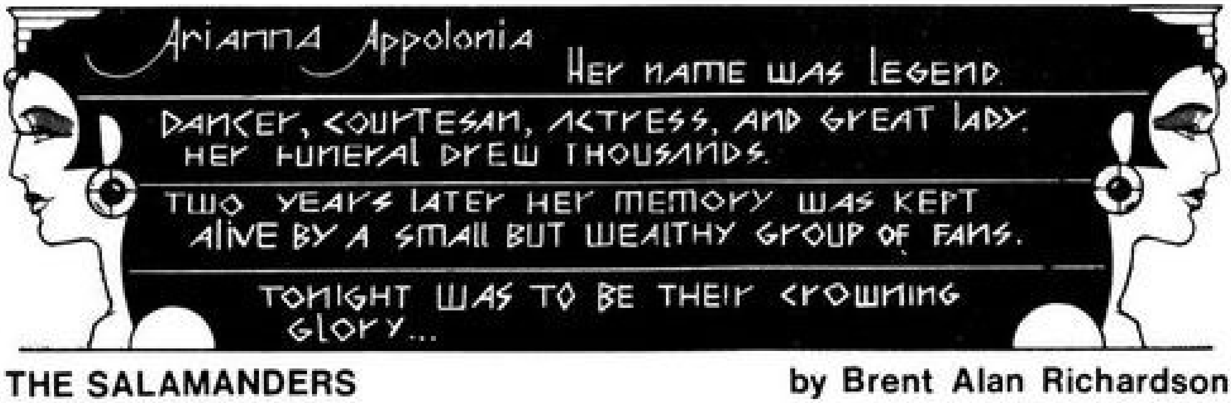


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

UNIQUE
STORIES


SPRING RAIN

NEIL THE HORSE (and Soapy) by Arn Saba


Arianna Appolonia
Her name was legend.
Dancer, courtesan, actress, and great lady. Her funeral drew thousands.
Two years later her memory was kept alive by a small but wealthy group of fans.
Tonight was to be their crowning glory...

THE SALAMANDERS by Brent Alan Richardson

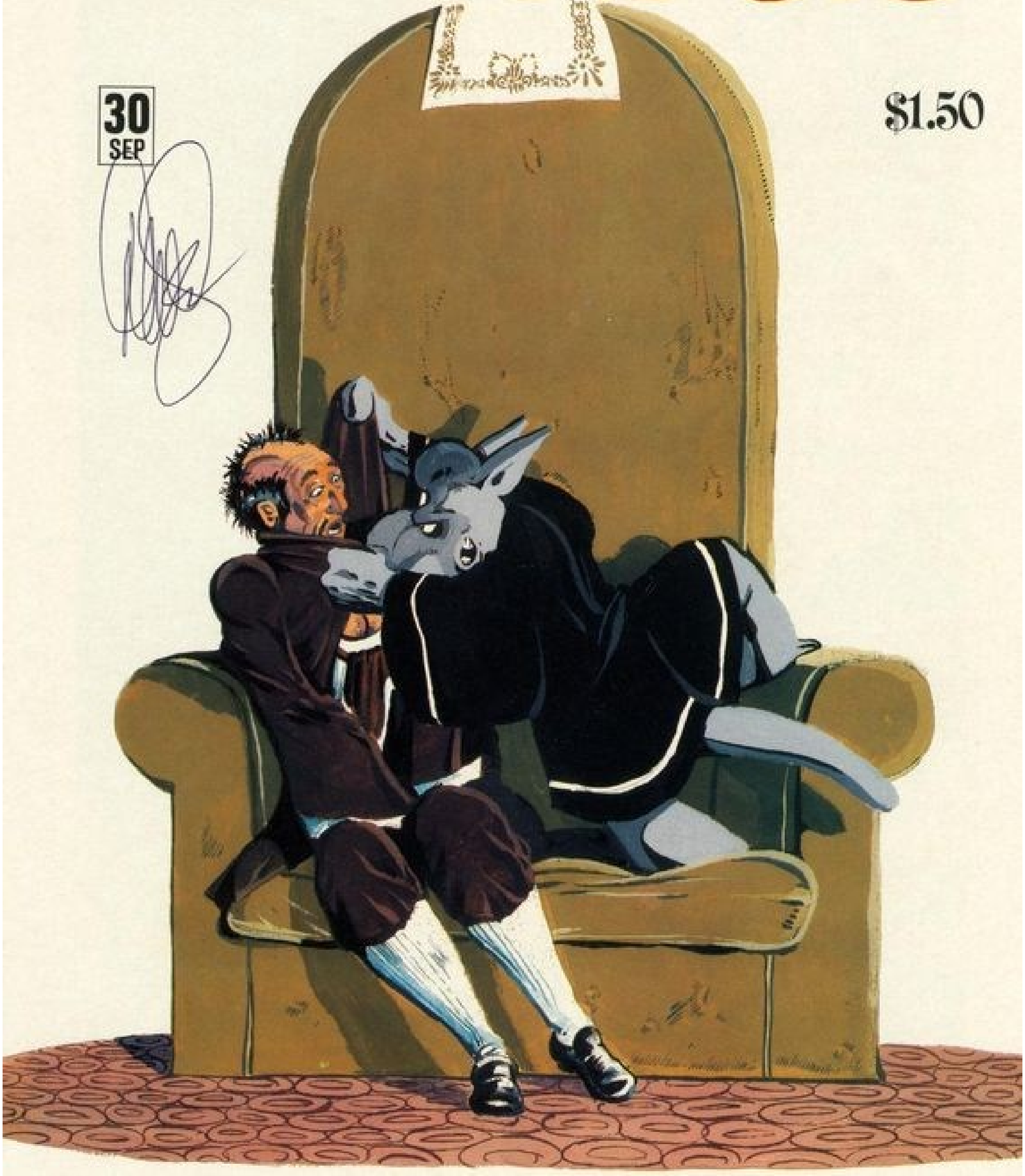
ISSN 0229-010

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

30
SEP

$1.50



A Note from the Publisher

Well it's the end of August, and by some miracle I survived Chicago and Dave even returned from San Diego in one piece.

The folks who run the ChicagoCon are undoubtedly the people responsible for my renewed enthusiasm for conventions. I tend to feel out of place at conventions. They are, after all, a place for artists to get their justly deserved praise. Somehow, a publisher feels out of place. Sure - Jim Shooter goes, but I'm not even in the same ball-park as Jim, let alone playing the same game. What changed this attitude for me was spending some time in Chicago with Dean Mullaney (publisher of Eclipse the Magazine). Dean was a guest also, but he spent alot of time talking to people and just generally making as much contact with all kinds of people as possible. We spent at least one of the evenings talking -- well into the wee hours of the morning. Most of what we talked about was just letting me know what was happening with other publishers. But to me the biggest thing is that Dean made me feel like a publisher in my own right. Hey -- you're not just the artist's wife, you're somebody too!!

All I can say is WOW!!! Thanks muchly Dean. I may not always know just what I'm doing, but at least now that I'm not alone in that feeling. Finding out that the problems I run into are not only experianced by people like Dean and the Pini's (Elfquest) and Tom Skulan (FantaCo), but knowing that they can deal with them, is like having a burden lifted off of my shoulders. It's nice to know that these people are only a phone-call away. Dave can appreciate the fact that I have problems that don't relate to the art side of things -- but he doesn't see it the way another publisher does.

Anyways, as you can see, ChicagoCon and the people there have turned my head right around about alot of things. I'm not quite as nervous about trying something like Unique Stories as I was before. It certainly helped alot to see that people enjoy Arn Saba's work. Cat Yronwode is a good example of someone who seems to be there just to give others moral support. Thanks Cat for your support of both Arn and Unique Stories (and me!)

Speaking of Unique Stories, starting with next issue we're going to be adding eight pages to Cerebus, and four of them will be short stories by different Unique artists. In issue No. 31, we will be featuring Brent Alan Richardson (who will be appearing in Unique Stories No. 4, 5 and 6). By the time you read this the Albany FantCon will have come and gone (Sept. 19 & 20th) so I hope that some of those of you who are reading this will have had the chance to meet Alan (with Dave and I) in Albany.

Enough of this -- I haven't said everything I wanted to, but it's too hard to keep thinking this hard. See ya next issue!!!

Deni

CEREBUS

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AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,

There is an old proverb written in Ripple on the wall of a pay toilet in L.A. It says, "Artists draw magic castles, dreamers live in them, and realists collect rent from both." My advice to the author of that bit of graffitti is to stuff it. You, Dave Sim, way up there in no-man's land, have captured the very essence of what comic-books are all about, and I'm sure you have enough left over for the rent.

When I was first exposed to your aardvarkian adventures, I was floored. Now, I've seen a lot of bad acts in my day, from the hearst demolition derby held at Forest Lawn, to the albino bake-off on Santa Cruz beach. But I have never seen anything as insanely fuckin dull as the regurgitated cow puke screwed out by Marvel and DC these days. I had given up hope with the departure of Smith, Wrightson, and Steranko from the ranks, but no more.

Your tributes to Warner Bros. and Groucho are a stroke of genius. Your sense of timing and pacing are beautiful, you should be writing screen plays not to mention running the country. You've got a handle on politics that I think Reagen stole for his cabinet members. Consider yourself commended, praising comics is on my list of favorite things to do right next to nude wrestling 300 lb. cossaks in fields of cactus and french kissing dead snakes.

The facts cannot be overlooked, you talk of copying Smith in your earlier issues. As Smith copied Kirby in his, we all have our inspiration. If you compare Conan No. 1 to, say, "The Black Hound of Vengence" issue, a form of evolution takes place. Do the same to Cerebus. You, Dave Sim, have evolved much like Barry Smith, into a Tour de Force of graphic story telling and have earned your place among the legends of ground-breaking visionaries who are the shining light on a very dark and dingy horizon.

P.S. My attempt at Cerebus is a lame excuse to get something published in this book.

Dave Kottas
333 Cobalt Way, Suite 106
Sunnyvale, Calif. 94086

Deni has a question. Deni wants to know why a ground-breaking visionary like me spends so much time lighting up dark and dingy horizons and so little time picking up the mess they leave in the living room every night. (Dave Kotta's contribution art-wise, is on the bottom of this page. And I've never said any such thing, Dave. Not out loud. Deni)

To: Distinguished Dave and the Divine Denise:

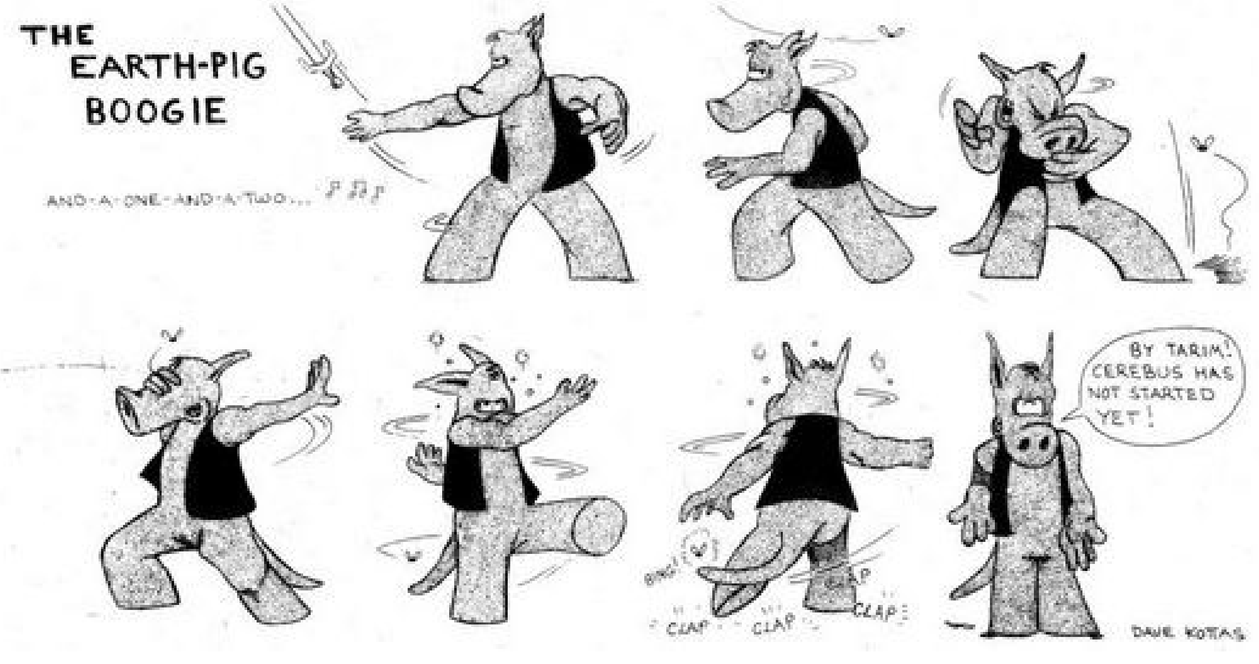
I can wait no longer.

This letter may take forever to reach you, since our very own "Canada Post/Postes Canada" (soon to be a Coronary Corporation) is once again On Strike, for some comfier pillows on the sorting desks or something. However, the very last thing wedged into my mailbox before service was disrupted was a copy of the latest Cerebus, (No. 27), and I want to write while it's still fresh in my mind; it looks like it'll be a while before I receive the next one (cries of anguish!!)

I was lucky enough to meet both of you at a Toronto comic convention in the summer of '79. That Toronto Con was my first introduction to Cerebus. I half-heartedly bought the latest issue (No. 11 I think), devoured it, and returned eagerly to snap up the back issues. With the prices they're fetching now, I'm sure glad I did! I've kept my run of issues complete, buth with so many new Cerebus readers I hope you can reprint No. 1 for them (and bound and trimmed correctly this time!)

Long overdue congratulations on your continuing success. CEREBUS has persisted through all the problems that hit a small publisher and emerged triumphant! Even CAPTAIN CANUCK has been cancelled once again, and you remain the longest running regular Canadian comic book, with a dedication and quality second to none.

Every month I look forward more and more to the latest issue. Number 27 was a pure delight from start to finish. The dialogue of Dirty Fleagle and Dirty Drew McGrew was a priceless blend of Foghorn Leghorn and Yosemite Sam, and visually they couldn't



AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

have been better.

The artwork and layouts were superb. Dave is really showing polish after 27 issues, and the graphics now stand tall, retaining all the imagination and the freshness of the first issues.

Highlights were: Cerebus' expressions of nonchalance as he suggests the "diamondback" game, and reveals to each of the brothers the other's "secret"; their parallel grins of triumph during the card game; the beleagured landlord as he listens to the destruction above him (and even another oblique dig at Claremont -- "BAMF" indeed!). What really had me in pain from laughing so hard was the parody of the Iranian hostages, all that media hype: "Day 300½ of the captivity nonsense. I can just picture Dan Rather reading the solemn news from Iest, with the ubiquitous "Cerebus held hostage" graphic behind him on the television each day!

The exerpt from the Iestian Parliament "Hansard" was a special treat for Canadians weary of the nonsense on the hill.

Dave's drawing style is firmly established -- his use of imaginative perspectives, angles, light and shadow are unique. Because of the pressure of producing a regular comic alone, some issues may have been a little shaky, but No. 27 was a solid, professional work, as all the recent issues have been.

But, more than anything, Cerebus is FUNNY. Dave's rare talent for dialogue was evident in every panel.

I hoist a mug of apricot brandy to both of you -- a job well done!

I met Dave again at Maplecon 3 here in Ottawa in October of 1980, and really enjoyed speaking with him.

I hope you had a great time at the San Diego Con this summer, and that the Fan Club continues to meet and flourish.

From reading the ads in the Buyer's Guide, I know your convention schedule gets busier all the time, but I hope you can return to this year's Maplecon, Dave, and this time bring Deni, too!

Well, gracias for putting up with this long-winded letter.

Keep up the good work.

Greg Kokko,
1800 Baseline Road,
Apartment 210,
Nepean (Ottawa), Ontario
K2C 3N1

P.S. Is the portfolio "Cerebus' Six Deadly Sins" distributed by anyone in Canada, or is it exclusively from Schanes & Schanes?

I will be in Ottawa again this year. I want everyone who goes to badger Chris Claremont unmercifully until he tells you what issue of the X-men will have Cerebus in it. Evidently he tried to get him in once before, and someone rejected it as "too obvious" (at least I think that's what Chris said). Memberships for all three days of Maplecon 4 are $12 until September 30 $15 thereafter. It will be held at the Skyline Hotel in Ottawa, October 23-25. Write Maplecon 4, P.O. Box 3156, Stn. D, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6H7.

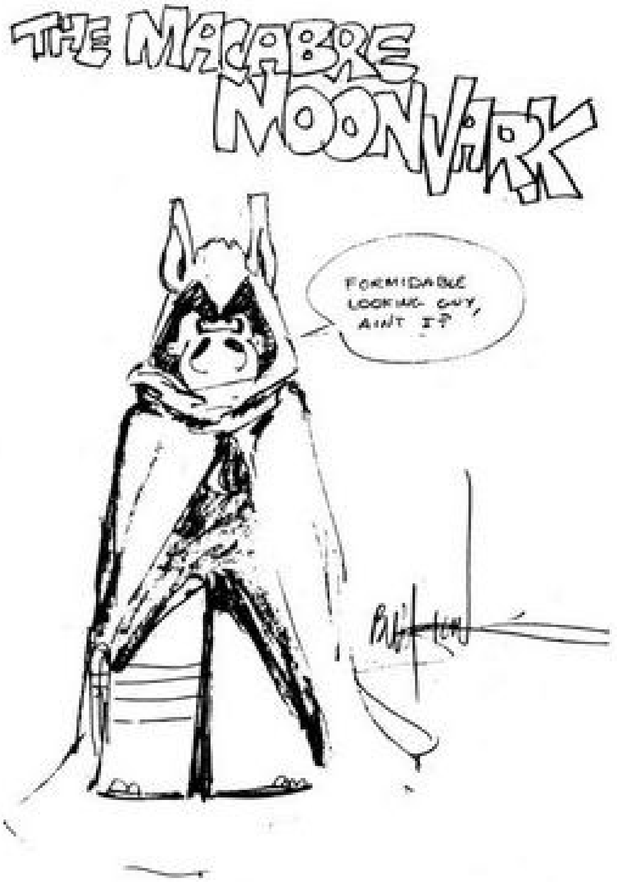
Dear David,

It has been some time since my last letter to you. In fact, I wrote to you after I bought Cerebus for the first time, (that was back at issue 5). I'm very pleased that Cerebus is still with us and is going strong after 27 issues and two reprint volumes. I look forward, with much anticipation, each month to reading Cerebus and only Frank Miller's **Daredevil** comes close to being as entertaining ... well, maybe **Iron Man** ... sometimes. One thing has been bothering me, David .... why have we never seen any other aardvarks in Cerebus? Doesn't he get lonely for his own kind? Wouldn't he like to see another Aardvark rather than Elrod? Is there something in Cerebus' past that makes him avoid contact with other Aardvarks? I know you will come up with some sort of answer ... won't you?

In all sincerity, David, thanks for producing one of the most enjoyable comics on the market today.

Mark Hauck
225 Maitland Drive
Alameda, Calif. 94501

Well, Mark, there has ***been*** *other aardvarks in Cerebus' world, but I can tell you truthfully that Cerebus has never met another of his kind in his travels. Cerebus has a rough idea of how different he is, but others have a very complete picture of his place in the scheme of things. There are uses for an aardvark that Cerebus doesn't have any idea about. Fortunately, I know most of them.*


THE MACABRE MOONVARK
FORMIDABLE LOOKING GUY, AIN'T I?

"A freebie sketch from the lovely and talented Bill Sienkiewicz at San Diego '81. Aside from having some of the best developed chest hair in evidence as he worked feverishly by the pool on a pastel portrait of Conan, resplendant in a pair of emerald swimming trunks (Bill, not Conan), the ever-alert Mr. Sienkiewicz showed good judgement in being younger than me and marrying someone capable of holding Gary Groth to a standoff in a contest of wills. Fans who would like to see a Dave Sim - Bill Sienkiewicz collaboration in Swords are invited to write "Put the screws to Sienkiewicz," c/o Denny O'Neil, Marvel Comics Group, 625 Madison Ave. etc. etc. Mention you saw it here, and we'll be lucky if Denny doesn't have me arrested."

Dave

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CEREBUS

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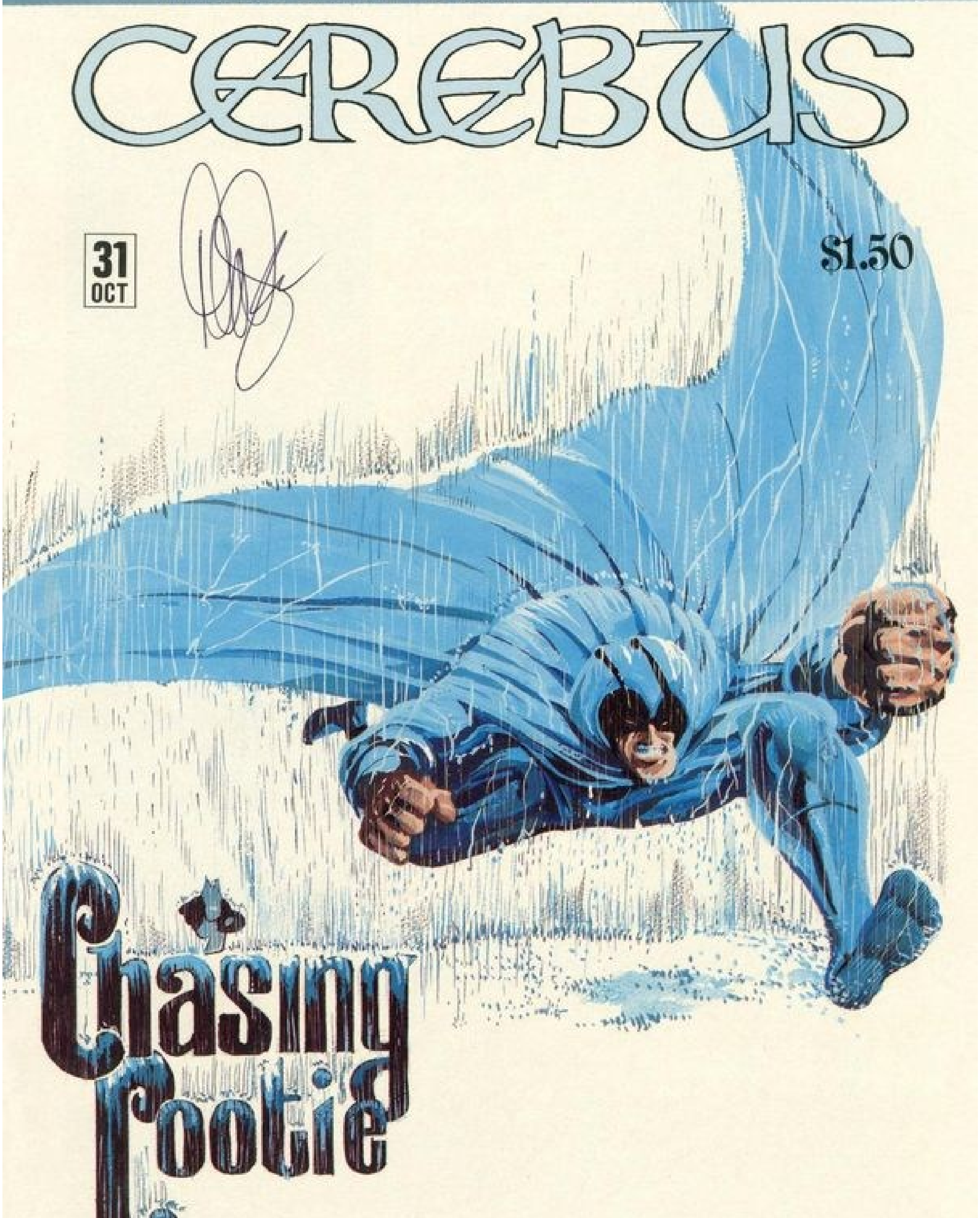

Chasing Cootie

A Note from the Publisher

Albany's FantaCon. What can I say? The money wasn't terrific -- but it was probably the best con Dave and I ever attended. The reason can be summed up in four words -- Richard and Wendy Pini. I met Wendy and Richard about two years ago at Phil Seuling's Comic Art Con in New York City. But we never had much of a chance to really get to know each other. At the Philidelphia Con that year Dave flew down to join me, but somehow there were always people pulling on either Richard or Wendy's elbows or someone else pulling on ours. Two years passed, and then something special happened. While Dave was at the San Diego Con this year he finally had a bit of time to talk to Richard and Wendy. He came home glowing. These were our kind of people. I mean -- they were running into the same type of problems we were. I was skeptical -- but we agreed to go to the FantaCon in Albany as the Pinis would also be there. I had the time of my life. Richard is an amazing person, the pressures he deals with. And Wendy -- her ability to laugh despite the pain that so often accompanies trying to achieve so difficult a goal astounds me. We sat up, the four of us, and just talked on one night, just about all night. The energy in that room was incredible! Richard would catch my eye sometimes when Dave and Wendy went off on "an artists trip" about solving some problem -- and Richard and I would just laugh. I could say "you know, how this thing happens, and, like, you can't explain why?" and Richard and Wendy would collapse in laughter because they knew just what I was talking about. Talk about suddenly not feeling alone facing all this stuff!

Albany was the *very first* con I can remember Dave leaving looking absolutely happy. Oh yes -- a special thank you to Brent Alan Richardson and Robert Spina for coming up to Albany. It's really nice to meet people you've been writing to for a while but never met. I'll be the first to admit that talking to people is my favorite hobby! So if you see me at a con -- yes, you out there, don't be shy!

So much has happened, once again, between the last issue and this that I've probably left out half a dozen things I had meant to say.

Oh ya -- one last thing. If you are in New York City or are going to be visiting some time -- go see the Chrysler Building at night some time. Better yet -- get a hard-core New Yorker to show you it -- what a beautiful sight. Excuse my gushing, but although I wouldn't want to live anywhere but Kitchener, New York City is sure a heart stopper! See you next issue!

Deni

CEREBUS

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AARDVARK COMMENT

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Deni:

I just got CEREBUS No. 26. Very interesting, as Arte Johnson used to say -- particularly the letters page -- pardon, the *letter* page.

I find myself agreeing with Patten & Co. about the abrupt transition and whatnot; to take T'Gitans as an example -- regardless of their military proficiency (or lack thereof), it seems a trifle annoying to dispose of them with one offhanded reference by a man of questionable veracity. It is true that littering the streets of Palnu with corpses while T'Gitans sack the place wouldn't be much fun for anyone (except maybe the Letterer), but you could have at least had a "Meanwhile -- in Palnu" aside which featured dead T'Gitans littering the streets, while the city's inhabitants went about their business, seemingly oblivious to the goings-on. Perhaps I've been overexposed to the likes of Monty Python, but the absurdity of that idea appeals to me.

And Lord Gorce -- we (the readers) know virtually nothing about him. How, then, are we supposed to know that he has any military ability at all? How do we know that Gudre's plan was flawed? Answer to both questions: We don't. It's all well and good for you to say, "Lord Gorce made quick work of the T'Gitan hordes", but the stories give us readers exactly one indication that that is so: Weisshaupt's word. That being the case, it's possible (maybe) that Gudre was some sort of military/tactical genius, and thus able to whup Gorce -- but again, there's too little information. Mumble, mumble, dissatisfaction.

("Note: Personally, I think Gudre might have been able to pull it off, using the old Blitzkrieg technique, whose guiding principle is, "You can get away with anything, if you can move faster than your opponent can react.")

Lord Julius? I like the way you're handling him, thus far. There's just one thing: You say that practically everyone in Palnu is employed by the government, and that Julius pays his armies well and his bureaucrats even better. Okay; but where does the big J get the wealth to pay his people? I'm not very good at economics (nobody is), but I don't quite understand where all that money comes from -- particularly not in a socialist state. Umm -- there *is* one more thing. If this issue is any indication, it's nigh-impossible to get a contract with Palnu -- on second thought, forget it. Just one more indicator of the socialist nature of Palnu.

About 19th-century conservatives: I, for one, will reserve judgment on them until we get more data on how well such methods work. Uncle Jimmy was clearly a bust, so let's give the new kid all the rope he wants, and see if he hangs himself, alright? Really, could RWR be any worse than his predecessors?

One more thing on Lord Gorce, and his Amazing Revolutionary Desires: Regardless of how many RPM Julius' bureaucracy rotates at, there must be some persons who do indeed have real power (Julius, for one) and do know the score -- a stable center, an axis, if you will. Unless that axis consists of Dr. J. alone (something I find difficult to swallow), the people in that axis will, being people, not have 100% identical thoughts and opinions regarding Julius-as-leader. Possibly, there might be at least one member of said axis who outright despises Lord Julius; more likely, there'd be folks who'd like someone a bit less frivolous for their Grandlord; and if all of the preceding is correct, Gorce has a ready-made spot to push in the thin end of his revolutionary wedge. All he has to do is locate the right people....

About the break between No. 20 and 21: I'll take your word for it, and continue greedily snapping up each new issue. Speaking of new issues, I'll now speak on the story of No. 26. I liked it -- as per normal for this zine. For some reason, I keep being reminded of King Gama in Princess Ida (is Dave a Gilbert & Sullivan fan?).... At any rate, I did indeed like this issue -- and thanks for showing us peons one way that Palnu gets its money (but do you expect us to believe that there are enough gullible people in Estarcion to support Palnu? But then, at 700 crowns per, I suppose you don't need too many pigeons...). By the by -- how came you to put in circular panel-borders? Perchance was it because of the trivial fact that much existing coinage is also circular? Regardless of the reason, it worked.

Thought for Dave: Ignore any suggestions that you change the way you do things in CEREBUS. You're doing wonderfully as is, and complaints such as the ones I started with are simply offered from concern that the Earth-Pig might deteriorate into Just Another Zine (highly unlikely, but the concern is still there...). What the hell, part of the fun is, as with any continuing story, attempting to second-guess the course the book will take. Thus far, I've never done so successfully, but I don't care, because the weirdness which *does* occur is so good.

Quentin
845 Laverne Way
Los Altos, Calif. 94022

There is indeed too little information. To be quite frank, I am torn on the one hand between telling everything in a kind of monumental sixty-page-three-issue-crash-semester-of-Estarcion-501, that would keep the Continuity Wolves at bay and probably plummet sales, and my author's instinct which says that as long as you're all drooling out there, I must be doing something right.

Personally, I agree with you on the Blitzkrieg thought. The standing army being raised by Groce would have to be highly undisciplined, disorganized and tentative by virtue of its makeshift origin. The confidence needed by the T'gitans to overcome the sheer numbers can be attributed to their being equally new to the eating up of someone else's territory. Chances are they would have expected no greater resistance in their assault on Palnu than they faced at Fluroc. Basically this is about as sound as the Russians capturing Martha's Vineyard and figuring taking Washington would be as easy.

Since we are travelling with Cerebus and hearing news of other cities about as fast and as often as he does, and since Weisshaupt had a vested interest in Cerebus giving up the T'gitans, I would say you could attach as much credibility to it as you think is appropriate. Most Cerebus fans I've talked to seem to think Weisshaupt suckered him. Weisshaupt is an interesting chap and a wheeler-dealer. We're not done with him yet.

Palnu is essentially structured like a feudal society. It is in the middle of some of the best agricultural land in Estarcion. It produces enough to feed all the farmers and their families as well as the population of the actual city. The crop failures mentioned so often in the Feldwar States and Iest have missed the Palnan lands. Think of them as wheat Arabs. They are being courted for their wealth.

Lord Julius is not playing by the established rules and his reputation of grand larceny as Economic Policy has ruined him in the eyes of the other world leaders. But so what? As the Palnan currency goes so goes the Feldwar States, Iest and several of the Southern City-States.

This is too attractive to the emerging class of merchants to pass up no matter what Lord Julius' reputation. For his part, the proceeds Lord Julius realizes from bribe money more than compensates for the fact that he pays about twenty percent more than the going price on his government contracts. It maintains his image as the eccentric you can milk for millions if you just know the right buttons to push and increases the incoming bribes which he distributes to all his bureaucrats, soldiers and cronies in ever-increasing amounts, like dividends for being an up-standing citizen. Citizenship in Palnu is by invitation only. You have to show the ability to make lots of money and connive your way out of paying your bills. The peasant farmers are kept at a very low standard of living, but they are permitted to trade their surplus wheat to whichever market they choose to sell; Iest, Beduin, Sepran Empire, Upper Felda. The ones who start making money in large amounts begin sending in their own bribes get an invitation to a Festival or High Tea or Lord Julius' Every Other Fortnight Booze-up and are granted instructions on where they start work. At the end of their first day on the job, they get sealed

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instructions on where they report for work the next day. You answer all the mail when you arrive at your post and then you go home. All correspondence coming into the city is searched. Any bribe over a fixed amount is relayed directly to Lord Julius' office. Any bribe below that amount is viewed as groft money, split more or less equally between the army and the bureaucracy. In your spare time you can do business with anyone you want. A lot of these people sell directories in their spare time. They just don't deliver. You get a pretty good tootsy-frootsying when you deal with anyone from Palnu.

That's what's hard about locating the right people (in your Gorce scenario). The Eye in ,the Pyramid is a conspiracy of dissatisfied bureaucrats. Anyone found at a meeting or in the company of a known "Eye" doesn't receive instructions on where next to report for work. Within twenty-four hours, they lose influence in all sectors of the society including whatever tenacious contact they established with the upper echekous and inner circles. Opting for the "Eye" is usually the last resort of a bailing bureaucrat. They have no access to the bribes and must subsist on what they earn outside the bureaucracy. Most are ejected from the city if they refuse to change their behavior. The nutbar in issue 14 through 16 was obviously not a major force in the group judging by his stringent idealism about the movement. There are also diverging viewpoints on how solid the group is. Anyone who might know would have a vested interest in lying about it.

For the next number of issues, we'll be seeing the effect all of this has had on Cerebus. He understands that Palnu operates on a system that is largely smoke and no fire. He was uncomfortable in Palnu, not so much because he objected to it morally or (as he claimed) that he wanted to be back in the great outdoors. As I mentioned in an earlier letter column, he hasn't slept in a tree for a while. He sought a roof and a warm bed as early as No. 17. The urban attitudes he found strange and unattractive early on now have obvious reason to him; wealth for its own sake. Getting a wall full of gold because you beat someone at his own game is satisfying to Cerebus in a way that stumbling onto it could never be.

Anyone else want a nice long answer?

Dear Dave and Deni,

Curiouser and curiouser. The audacious aardvark's first Mind Game in issue No. 20, then a President *Weisshaupt*, then Cerebus' signing of his own ransom note, in issue No. 27, with the telltale eye-in-the-pyramid, and now, with issue No. 28, we find our befuddled beast tripping through (Leary's?) Eighth Sphere into "Mind Game II", learning that the *Illusionists* wield a certain influence on the Estarcion political scene. And Cerebus as a one-time sorceror's adept! What won't you think of next?! Is it possible that you have seen the fnords???

Sirius, I mean, seriously, I've been following the aardvark's adventures since his inception, and have yet to be disappointed. But the (cosmic) trigger of this current issue has finally prompted me to express my appreciation. The crisp, clean artwork, biting satire and profound wit, the often poetic quality of the scripting, not to mention the irascible yet eminently lovable earth-pig himself all combine to make for one of the best comics on the market today -- underground, above ground, or otherwise. And, to think: CEREBUS is a Canadian product! Nationalistic fervour is not my trip, but it's heartening to see some down-home folks making good -- in fact, making better and better -- especially in a country so often lacking in identity and pride.

Really, I'm not interested in trying out for the Comics Journal. I just wanted to thank you both for such superior work.

Diana Schutz
524 Lakeshore Road
Beaconsfield, Quebec
Canada H9W 4J7

Thank you for making nice on me. Perhaps if more Canadian comic book conventions would have headline Canadian guests (Gene Day, Rand Holmes, Arn Saba, Jim Craig, Ken Steacy) instead of only featuring American talent, there might be more of a sense of Canadian identity and pride in these individuals. It's a strange country.

Dear Dave & Deni (now clearly not Pave and Peni)

Cerebus 29! Romantic interest returns to the chronicles of the valiant, swords-wielding earth-pig born. The aardvark may be only enjoying a foil for his duel-sharp wit and a drinking companion (does the Regency Elf tipple Apricot Brandy?), but we, your faithful readers, are out-right glad to see a well-drawn curve undulate from frame to frame.

The last supra-normal undulations from the superb Sim pen were Henrot's bubbly, emotion-hungry Gerbies in Cerebus 19. Mayhap we'll meet them again; they'd be just right as messengers between the hotel-bound (?) elf and the boundless Cerebus.

Four "Thankyou's"

1. For bringing those rotten dirty Fleagle Brothers within range of Aardvarkian vengence.
2. For revealing Cerebus in his naked glory (No. 29 pg. 3); my wife loved it, and I was glad you got rid of the frilly lace neck-piece!
3. For your Cerebus portfolio: "Six Deadly Sins". They're not merely well done; not merely dramatic & hilarious & insightful -- they're deucedly clever.
4. For having the persistence to produce excellence -- a Shakespearean blend of high comedy, intense drama, and psychological subtlety -- making Cerebus unequaled in comicdom.

Four "Requests"

A. Get *Cerebus* listed in Overstreet's *"Comic Book Price Guide"*
B. Tell us where to find: *Unique Stories*
C. Tell us where to find: Diamond Back Decks
D. Keep up the fine work!

David A. Holt
1966 Main West #1108
Hamilton, Ontario L8S 1J6

P.S. Is the Regency Elf a portrait of Deni?

A. Depending on where you are when you suggest this, you can get a lot of applause or you can get beaten to within an inch of your life. I think this is one of those things that will happen if enough people write to Bob Overstreet. Or another copy of number one sells for $125 in front of him.
B. The post-mortems are in Deni's letter elswhere in this issue.
C. Diamondback Decks will be available from all of the distributors listed on the inside front cover for $2.95 (plus a little something for postage). We will be selling a limited edition signed and numbered series of 500 that will be available only from us for $3.95 Limit of one per order. Deni will tell you when to send for them. When Deni is no longer hip deep in mail that needs to be answered; that's when Deni will tell you you can order.

Dear Dave and Deni,

Well, the postal strike is in its sixth week and even though it has shown signs of becoming as long-running and damaging an institution as the Alberta-Ottawa energy talks, "reliable sources" tell us that the tentative settlement will be ratified and everything will be on the move in a couple or so days. So, being the incredible optimist that I am (and *naturally* being trusting of *reliable* sources) I'm gambling and writing to you now.

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Did you miss me? I'm sure you did. (But don't get *too* effusive about it.)

When I saw the cover of No. 28, I was immediately apprehensive. The illustration itself was fine, continuing the trend in recent issues to very good covers, but it was the title, "Mind Games II", that bothered me. Sequels are almost always disappointments. (The only exception in the past few years in my view being "The Empire Strikes Back" over "Star Wars".) Who can forget such travesties as "Rocky II", "Jaws 2", "Beneath the Poseiden Adventure" (or whatever)....? Sure, No. 20's "Mind Game" was different, sure it was good, but were you going to the well once to often? Was No. 28 going to be a mere continuation or swipe from No. 20 instead of a true progression or embelishment? Well, *was* it?

Well, as I'm sure *someone* famous once said, it was worse than I had hoped but better than I had feared. It was still confusing (or perhaps enigmatic) but new shafts of illumination were seen. The dialogue was perhaps wittier still than No. 20. And this time the abrupt change from last issue's plotline can be seen as part of a plan rather than greeted with pure incomprehension as it was before. Only, I hope that you *are* going to complete the kidnapping story properly. If you don't, then "Mind Game II" can be viewed as a cop-out or as coasting. ("Whenever I plot myself into a corner, I'll just give 'em "Mind Game X' and be on my way.") So, does the "continued" at story's end refer to No. 29 or to, say, No. 36?

Lastly, I thought that the pictures didn't mesh too well with the words this time out. Each was nice on its own, but the synergistic relationship was not always present. (Have you ever considered writing a Cerebus novel to get this surfeit of words out of your system?)

Here's hoping that you get this at least a few weeks before Easter.

"T.M. Maple"
No. 672

My first letter after the postal strike ended. Good news, eh? There are going to be more MIND GAME stories in the future. MIND GAME III will introduce a new character to the Earth-Pig's brain. As for completing the kidnapping story, Cerebus has made a wise decision to not talk about it. Again, the fact that he woke up safe played a large part in the decision. The difference in time lapses will be explained in the story "What Happened Between Issues Twenty and Twenty-two" that Gene Day and I will be cramming into 8 pages in the back of Swords of Cerebus Volume 3. I am intentionally continuing each story and picking up within minutes of the previous story's ending, now, so as to avoid this sense of missing critical puzzle pieces. "What Happened..." will give you an idea of the kind of things going on around him that Cerebus isn't aware of, but a good bit of it will be enigmatic, indeed -- Sorry.

Dear Dave,

Who is the human in the Cerebus costume of late? Cerebus seems to have grown human arms, and looks like soon he will have human legs. It doesn't look right on an Earth-Pig Born. Cerebus has changed quite a lot since issue No. 1, lost a lot of nose, and most of it for the better, but Cerebus just doesn't look right as a short human with a tail and oversized Spock ears.

Remember what you wrote in Swords of Cerebus, Volume 1, before issue No. 1. You apologized for the gross-out on page two, but said it was necessary to convince people that the cute aardvark could be (and is) mean. Cerebus is not so cute any more, and he is losing the build in contradiction of cuteness versus nastyness. When Cerebus is looking as mean as he does now, he loses the karima of the "killer-who-looks-like-a-bunny". A "killer-who-looks-like-an-aardvark-thug" is not Cerebus. Issue No. 6, page 3, first panel sums up Cerebus exactly: a cute Cerebus is holding a sword, standing on a big lug of a human who Cerebus has just clobbered, and Cerebus is mumbling to himself "TARIM! It never fails -- two hours in any of these accursed cities and some farmer with more muscle than brains comes flying at me..."

Picture Cerebus with huge muscular arms (like he is now) standing on top of that guy. Cerebus now looks like he could beat that guy with no problem, as well as make a bull elephant yell "uncle". The contradiction of Cerebus is not there. This contradiction of cute and nasty is what makes Cerebus so much fun to read. I grant you that we don't need to see it in a tragedy. I hope you understand what I am trying to say, and agree with me. Could you give Cerebus back his cute, non-muscular, tubular arms.

If you don't agree, I think we ought to put it up for a reader survey. Hey Fans of Cerebus, write in and tell Dave whether or not you like to see Cerebus with muscles. (I know, Dave, you're an artist and it's kind of uncool for me to tell you how to draw *your* character, but Cerebus is everybody's now, I hope.)

Mark Hahn
P.O. Box 2339
Campus Station
Socorro, New Mexico

Let's not shuffle my bread and butter into the "public domain" category just yet, Mark (I think I understand what you mean). Anyone want to second the motion from the right honorable member for Campus Station?

Comrades:

I want to thank you for Cerebus and the way he dispelled all my fears. Yes, thanks to Cerebus I am no longer tortured by the anxiety which haunted me day and night ... And I owe it all to you. What, you ask, oh what spectre plagued this innocent lad; preyed on his mind.

I was afraid I might accidentally have some money left over at the end of the summer.

Well, our valiant earth-pig took care of that in a hurry. After some clod made me read No's. 24 - 27, I ran out and spent everything I had on more Cerebus.

I'm not much of a comics buff, so I can't comment on artwork or publishers or underground comics and I can't say I rank Cerebus with Elfquiest of X-Men or Man-Thing because I've never heard of them (an unpardonable sin, I imagine) but if it's any consolation, I rank Cerebus with Doonesbury and Mad as an excellent satire (which I consider one of the highest art forms.) (Which is why I was so overjoyed to see my idol Julius Marx in a Duck Soup-like story way back in No. 14. I think Lord Julius would curb his tyrannical ways with a Margaret Dumont character by his side.) Tarim, I'm getting bogged down in parenthetical phrases!

As I said (well no, I didn't say, I wrote), I know nothing of art, but I can appreciate Bardic talent. Julius' Marxian dialogue is flawless, as is Elrod's "Senator Claghorn" accent.

Good Luck and thanks again for a comic that saved me from the brink of sanity.

Peter Steiger
Box 15906
Stephen F. Austin State University
Nacogdoches, Texas 75962

drool-drool-gibber* Yer welcome *huh huh huh

UNIQUE STORIES

and

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

This is an announcement that I am not very happy to make. In the last few months I've been writing a lot about "Unique Stories". Unfortunately, I have come to realize that now is not the time for me to branch out into a new venture, and so I am going to have to announce that "Unique Stories" and "Out of the Depths", as of now, has been cancelled. Cerebus has been growing at a tremendous rate, and as a result -- I've been unable to spend hardly any time at all on "Unique Stories" and "Out of the Depths".

The submissions have piled up and the letters of inquiry from the ads posted have gone unanswered. With 60 to 80 Cerebus letters to answer every month, let alone the legal and technical problems that have to be dealt with every day, I just had to let this go. I finally have realized that the decision to do "Unique Stories" and "Out of the Depths" was just not a timely one. As much as I want to do Unique, I would have to let too many things slide with Cerebus. And that, I cannot do.

What time I've been able to spend on artists such as Arn Saba and Brent Alan Richardson was not enough and a lot of work would have to be done before their work could see print. It will, in time, see print. But for now I don't want a rushed job, and I feel confident that any artist would feel the same way.

I apologize to those of you who have sent me submissions, especially if you've not heard back from me. I have at least 30 of them sitting next to me that I haven't even seen yet. Everyone *will* hear from me in some form or another, though.

With any luck, and a bit more experience and time, I will probably try again. When I do, and when all the machinery for setting up a new book is in place -- I'll let you know. I'll probably let the whole world know. It's a disappointment to me and to those of you who were either looking forward to reading or hoping to submit material for it. But I refuse to do it if it isn't done right. I only hope you all agree with me and are willing to bear with my growing pains.

Thanks to everyone for their enthusiasm and support of "Unique Stories" and "Out of the Depths."

Deni Sim

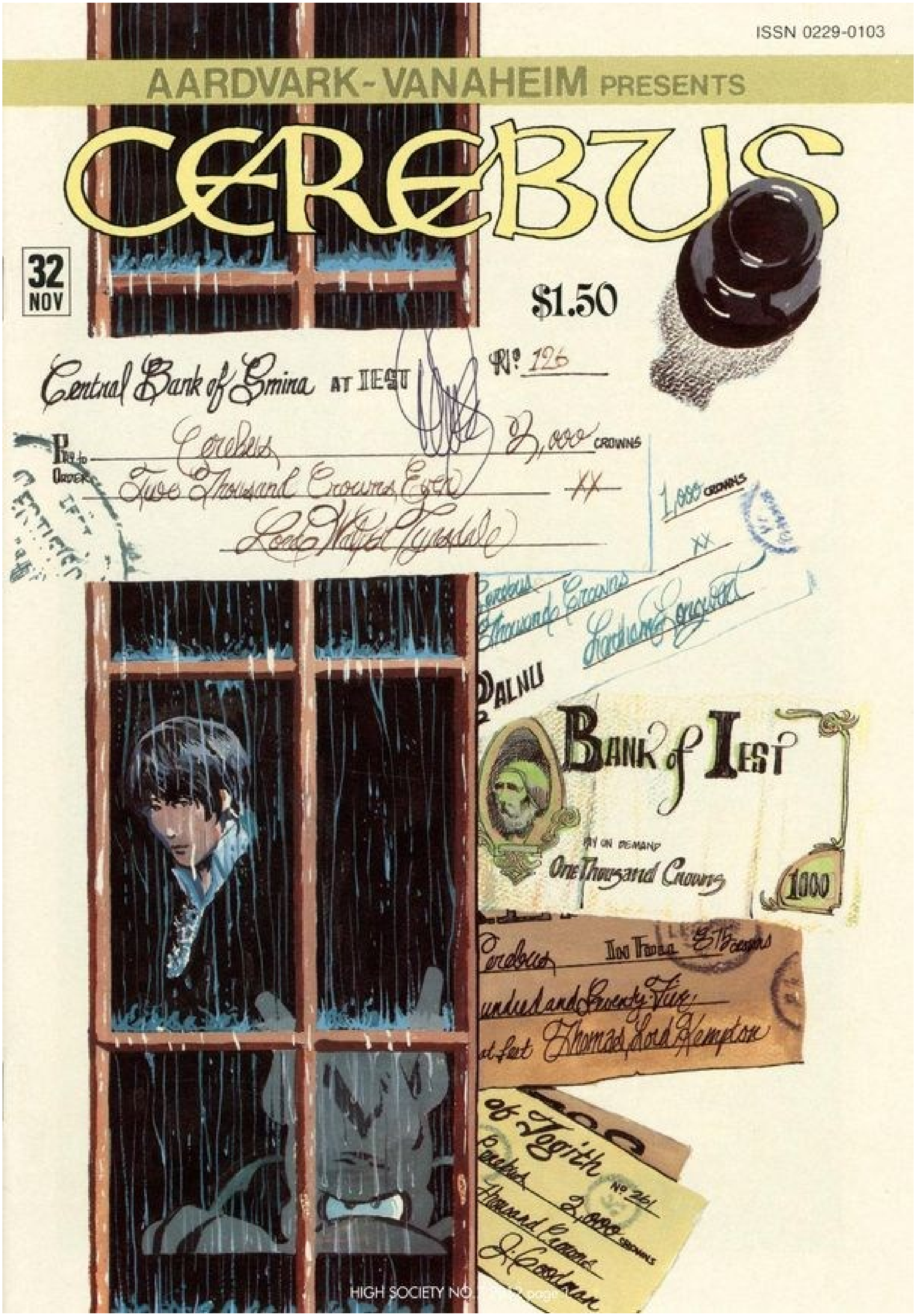
ISSN 0229-0103

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

32
NOV

$1.50


Central Bank of Gmina at Iest
No 126
Pay to Order Cerebus 5,000 Crowns
Five Thousand Crowns Even xx
Lord Whitfield Tynsdale
1,000 crowns
xx
Cerebus
Thousand Crowns
Lord Julius Longwort
PALNU
Bank of Iest
Pay on demand
One Thousand Crowns
1000
Cerebus
Two Thousand 575 crowns
Hundred and Seventy Five
Thomas Lord Kempton
of Togith
No 261
Cerebus 2,000 crowns
Thousand Crowns
J. Goodman

]

A Note from the Publisher

This issue I'm having a bit of trouble trying to write this note to you. Three times now I've gotten up and done some needling little thing (moved curtains, made coffee, etc.) because I couldn't sit down to write this. The Diamondback Decks are now going out to our distributors. If you are one of those first 150 people who joined the fan club, they will be going out from this address in another week or so. I'm still waiting for the mailing envelopes.

Bob Rittinger has been receiving a few letters of inquiry from people who want to know where they can get Cerebus. Bob writes articles for various people for us and isn't involved with the distribution end of Cerebus at all. If you have these sort of questions, or want subscriptions, Harry Kremer's ad for Now & Then Books has been in Cerebus for quite a while. I suggest you write to him for ordering information. I can't tell you if a store in your area carries Cerebus -- as that is our distributors' job. Your best bet is to ask your local comic shop if he will look into taking Cerebus. Our distributors are listed right here on this page.

Swords of Cerebus Volume Three should be out to the distributors and shops by the end of November. In fact, it should be out about the same time this issue is. It will reprint issues 9, 10, 11 and 12 and has a short story in the back that Dave did with Gene Day (a friendship that goes back a long way), called "What Happened Between Issues 20 and 21". Since everyone was asking Dave that question, it seemed obvious that he would have to answer it sooner than he had planned.

A short note from fan club president Fred Patten: Membership for the "Friends of Cerebus" fan club will need to go up to eight dollars for a one-year membership. The reason for this is that when Fred first set the rate he went by what he thought it would cost, just looking to meet the costs of the newsletters (four times a year) and the "goodies" that come with each newsletter. However, as with most things these days, he has found the cost of everything to be more than was expected. I hope that this increase will not deter any of you who were going to join the club or renew your membership, as I have been impressed with the quality of the work Fred is doing. I've heard from him that the next newsletter is going to be quite long and should include a lot more prose as well as the art that has been so enjoyable. Dave and I get a real kick out of that newsletter because it's a way of seeing other people's views of Cerebus.

Well, I think I've covered everything -- oh yes! An aside to our readers in England: I've been getting quite a few letters complaining how hard it is to get Cerebus in England and Europe. Starting with this issue -- Titan Distributors (in London, England) will be taking Cerebus from one of our distributors. So if you run a shop -- or know someone who does, pass the word on. Hope that it will help bridge that gap the Atlantic seems to create for us.

That's it for now -- see you all next month!!

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 32 NOVEMBER, 1981

Publisher
Denise Loubert

Distributors:
Bud Plant Inc.
P.O. Box 1886
Grass Valley, CA
95945

Pacific Comics
P.O. Box 99217
San Diego, CA
92109

Glenwood Distribution
124 Vandalia St.
Collinsville, IL
62234

Capital City Distributors
2827 Perry Street
Madison, Wisconsin
53713

Styx Comic Service
Box 3791, Stn. B
Winnipeg, Man., Canada
R2W 3R6

Now & Then Books
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Kitchener, Ont
N2G 1W1

Cerebus Fan Club
c/o Fred Patten
11863 West Jefferson Blvd.
Culver City, California
90230
Membership ..$5.00 per year

Advertising
Abraxas Studio
Richard Bruning
P.O. Box 1606
Madison, Wisconsin

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published fifteen times a year by Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc., P.O. Box 1674 Station 'C', Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2, including three "Swords of Cerebus" in winter, spring and fall. All contents © 1981 Dave Sim. Any inquiries regarding use of the characters, images, or situations depicted should be addressed to Denise Loubert. No unauthorized reproduction allowed except for review or other Journalistic purpose. Advertising rates furnished on request. Printed in Canada by Preney Print & Litho Inc., Windsor, Ontario.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Deni & Dave,

Cerebus is pretty good. Good, but no better than Eisner's Spirit, Kurtzman's Mad, or Goodwin's Blazing Combat stuff. The question is -- can you sustain? No problem? Ha!!

LEE!! THOMASS!! O'NEIL!!

That scare you? It oughta. Three promising and, it seemed, talented artists who have now become the grand dinks of comic-dumb. (Unlike Dim Jim who was of course born a dink and can't be held responsible.)

To be sure, you've got more talent in your pinkie, etc., but can you really keep churning this stuff out *twelve times a year?* Am I bringing you down yet, man? Ol' Stu is really getting one primo rush on all these negative vibes.

First when I was gonna write you I was gonna say how much I liked Cerebus and all that stuff, but it really sounded dumb and everything like all those other letters you get, like y'know, "Can I have one of your pencil stubs for a nose ring?", and, "I was lost until I found Cerebus. You light up my life. Your pal, John Paul II," so I went down to the local chapterhouse of the Conservative Christian United National Traditionalist Society where they were teaching the kids how to beat liberals to death with sealing clubs. Put me right in the mood.

Is Stu Potts political? Hah. Political about what? Gimme an issue, I'll give you a Republican -- you can wipe your ass with it.

What was I talking about? Oh yeah, Cerebus is real good and you draw good. Reading Cerebus is like listening to a Beethoven symphony or even an X-ray Spex album. So they did a review of Cerebus in Epic, eh? I didn't know. I have to buy the cheaper brands. Charmin's softer anyway.

Thanks for the free Cerebus'. I love payola. I did some cartoons with Cerebus in them. Like Tricky the Dick says, who you kidding crime doesn't pay?

Your pal,
John Paul II
(Stu Potts)
c/o Comics Journal
196 West Haviland Lane
Stamford, CJ 06903

Is Stu Potts political? you bet. His political-style cartoons ("Pott Shots") appearing regularly in The Comics Journal, not unlike those of Aislin and Oliphant, have a far truer ring to them than any given page of "insightful and constructive criticism". As a comics professional, I give him full marks for his integrity and skill. And if that doesn't destroy his credibility, nothing will.

Dear Dave and Deni,

Cerebus 26 & 27 were great! (come to think of it, the rest are great too) Cerebus held hostage! It's fantastic to see how quickly a barbarian aardvark catches on to surviving in "civilization" (get their money!)

I loved the idea in Cerebus No. 5 of Cerebus being a pagan deity. What a perfect job for him. He could battle with Tarim! It could answer his problem in Mind Game II (No. 28) about finding a philosophical path for life. Why not follow his own religion? Everything would be just the way he'd want it. I can see it now! "The Aardvark Temple for Intoxication" "Beer Sacrifices Here" WOW!

I like your idea in *Sword of Cerebus No. 1* of having Elrod, Julius, and Cerebus locked in a closet. Please do it. Please!

Could you do a satire character on Frodo from the Lord of the Rings? How about Reagan, Trudeau, and Thatcher as an advisory board for Lord Julius ("Slash that budget!" "Let me rule!" "What?")

Remember: "Might makes right. Might for Right. Might for Might. Right for Might. Fight Fight Fight!" Go Dave! Go Cerebus!

Aardvark Advocate,
Louis Schubert
2 White Birch Lane
Beacon Falls, CJ

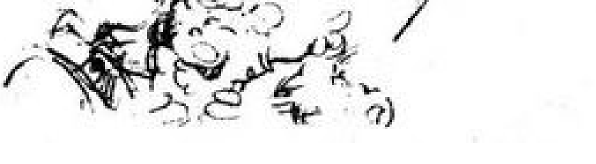
"Well, you know, I'm not the brightest guy in the world, but it seems to me that unless we starve the poor so we can arm every male between the ages of ten and ninety, we might as well hand ourselves over to World Cirinism."

"Madame Speaker, it is the considered opinion of my government that the right honorable former Chimp Mentor is playing Diamondback without a Magician."

"Now, just a minute, you aristocratic snob..."

"Gentlemen, please. At this most crucial juncture of the history of the world's great nations, we cannot, shall not, will not and do not propose to do anything which could be considered necessary, helpful, forth-right or clear-thinking. On this and any other matter even remotely related, there can be, will be, shall be and must needs be, no surrender."

Hmm. But how would it play in Beacon Falls?


THAT'S HIM, DADDY?
HE SAVED COMICS?
A BIG RABBIT?

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave, -- Oh, and Deni, too!

Alright, so maybe I'm just getting funny-looking and not turning into an aardvark after all. But did you have to doubt my sanity in print? Now everyone acts like I'm nuts or something. Not only that, they think I don't know how to spell "metamorphoses"! And one guy keeps asking me how my pelt is coming along!!! (Sorry, I was overcome by a wave of exclamation points.)

But on to more serious matters.

1) Why weren't you in on the recent *Spirit* "Jam" story? Even one panel in the inimitable Sim style would have been welcome. I hope it was because you were busy pouring your heart and soul into things aardvarkian and not due to criminal neglect on the part of Mr. Kitchen.
2) All true aardvarkians should write to Marvel and demand the *X-Men* give equal in-joke time to *Cerebus*. There must be parity with *Elfquest!* (Maybe Wolverine is a fan? It'd figure.)
3) Dave, you're supernatural! Your work just keeps getting better! Loved the portfolio, the painted covers are much better than the old ones, and your "P's" seem to be healing nicely. One gripe: on the cover of No. 26, is Cerebus foaming at the mouth or eating his tie? I'm simply dying to know.

Overall, your work is some of the best ever. *Ever.* Don't ever give it up or I'll come sit on your doorstep and turn into an aardvark and froth at the mouth (or eat my tie, I'm not sure which). Gotta go now, my elf is calling.

Yours till Mealc sinks,
J.C. (Ingrim) Swinford
1414 Esnoald Blvd.
Gurann, Boreala

1) I heard about the Spirit "jam" about a year ago... Marshall Rogers suggested that I "get in on it". I decided not to pursue the matter, for much the same reason that I don't invite myself to parties. I thought the story turned out to be remarkably good.
2) The first "Parity with Elfquest" rally will be held December 12, 1982 in Chris Claremont's living room. We hope all real Cerebus fans will attend.
3) Ho ho ho.

Dear Dave,

This is another letter from someone who picked up a back issue or two (in this case, *Sword of Cerebus* I & II) and went back the next day to buy everything else. Someone in Aardvark Comment (I don't recall who or when) stated that Cerebus is sentimental. I don't believe this is true. I can think of no one whose skin Cerebus would save before his own, unless *perhaps* (as in Lord Julius' case) he is a hired bodyguard.

I don't think Cerebus knows what the word "friendship" means. *If* he has anyone whom he considers a friend, *we* haven't met that person yet. (The only possible exception to this may be the Regency elf.) Cerebus' entire life philosophy is Looking Out for Number One.

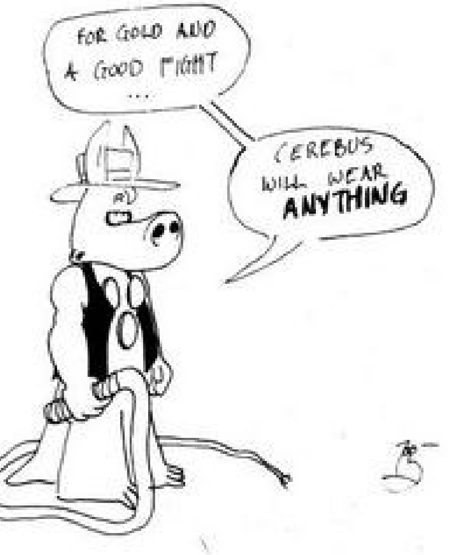
I should like to see Cerebus meet someone, in whom Cerebus is interested only for material gain, but who likes -- no, loves Cerebus purely for himself, and see how he reacts. I don't mean Jaka; she already loves Cerebus in a different way. I mean someone from whom Cerebus can discover -- or more likely, fail to discover -- the meaning of friendship. I'd like to see you write that. (Actually *I'd* like to write it...) On to another matter -- Deni's complaints re: bootleg Cerebus material. I'm a budding cartoonist myself, and I'm wondering if you would object to using Cerebus in material for con art shows. I've got several ideas for one-panel Cerebus gags (a copy of one is enclosed), but I don't want to tread on your feet after reading Deni's (very valid) complaint.

Looking forward to No. 30.

Paul Gadzikowski
6327 Lakewood No. A1
Chicago, Il.

I would agree with you that Cerebus doesn't know what friendship means. Right now. Most of his "friends" are people he knew in those rare times that he settled in one place for a month or two -- the guy who owned the hotel in number 27 for instance. Astoria and The Regency Elf are a whole new experience for him. As you'll see in the next few issues.

Anyone wishing to use Cerebus in a con art show, as an illustration in a fanzine or other such things is quite welcome to do so. A small "copyright Dave Sim" somewhere on such work would be appreciated, however.



Dear Deni and Dave:

I am writing this letter to ask your help in publicizing the First Annual Comic Fan Awards. I hope these awards will involve a large cross-section of comic readers and give comic professionals a better idea of what types of story and art are most appealing to large numbers of fans.

Because no fees are charged for participation, I am dependent on periodicals like yours to help me publicize this effort. I am requesting that you print the enclosed letter, either on your letters page or as part of an "in-house" ad page, in the issues to be released in November and/or December, 1981.

By publishing the letter in your comics, the chances of a certain aardvark being a winner are much better than if you do not participate. The advantages to you are the economic benefits resulting from the words "Award-Winning" on the cover, as well as the publicity value. I will send you complete results when they are tallied. Thank you for your help. Please feel free to write to me with any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,
David Craven

You talked me into it, you silver-tongued devil, you. If elected, I promise to serve to the best of my abilities and promise not to put "Award-winning" on the cover. If defeated, I promise to put "Award-losing", though.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

BALLOT

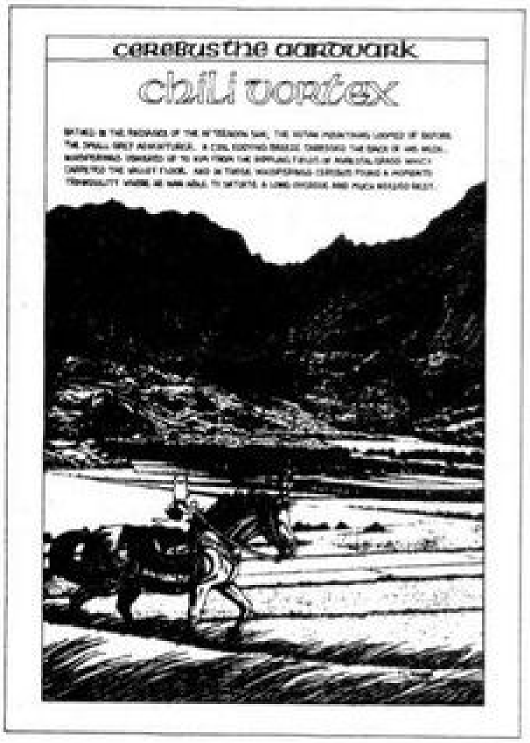
Dear Comic Fan,

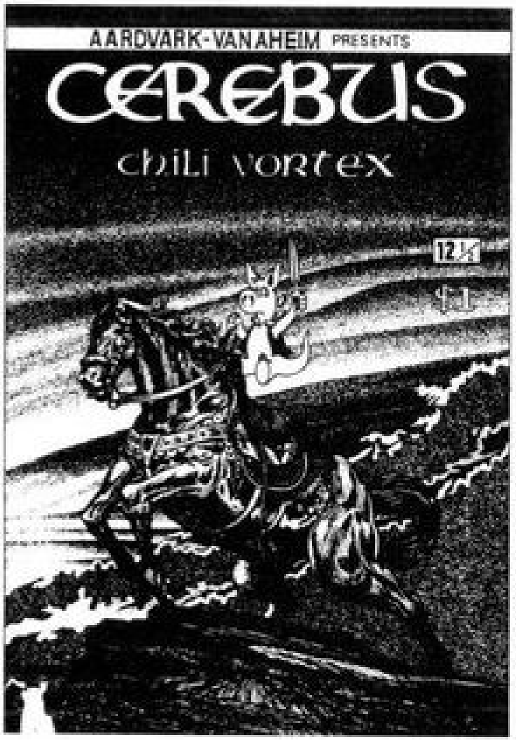
This letter is to announce the 1st Annual Comic Fan Awards. These awards are not sponsored by or affiliated with any professional publishing company or fanzine. In order to assure the largest possible participation, no fees will be charged for voting.

These are the rules:

1. Eligible Voters: any comic fan
2. Eligible for awards:
    a. Any comic story or cover published in a book or periodical dated 1981.
    b. Any comics-related dramatic presentation shown or broadcast in 1981.
3. Awards Given:
    a. Best Comic Short Story (1-12 pgs.) - writing (plot & script)
    b. Best Comic Novelette (13-25 pgs.) - writing
    c. Best Comic Novella (26-60 pgs.) - writing
    d. Best Comic Novel (61 pgs. or more) - writing
    e. Best Comic Short Story - art (pencils & inks)
    f. Best Comic Novelette - art
    g. Best Comic Novella - art
    h. Best Comic Novel - art
    i. Best Comic Short Story - coloring
    j. Best Comic Novelette - coloring
    k. Best Comic Novella - coloring
    l. Best Comic Novel - coloring
    m. Best Cover - drawing
    n. Best Cover - painting
    o. Best Dramatic Presentation
4. Vote for 5 choices or fewer in each category, in order of preference. If you feel no award should be given in a category, vote "No Award". If you feel unqualified to vote in a category, vote "Don't Know".
5. To vote for a category, give the name of the story, along with the title of the book or issue number of the periodical.
6. For the best cover and drama awards, give the book title, issue number of the periodical or title of the drama.
7. For continued stories (e.g., in the "Best Novel" category), give the story title and book title or issue number of only the first and last parts. Continued stories are eligible if any part is in a publication dated 1981.
8. For a copy of the results, send a SASE plus 10¢ with your ballot.
9. Results will also be sent to the publishers of: DC Comics, Marvel Comics, Gold Key/Whitman Comics, Warren Comics, Archie Comics, Harvey Comics, Kitchen Sink Comics, Comely Comics, Charlton Comics, Elfquest, Heavy Metal, Eclipse Magazine, First Kingdom, The Comic Reader, The Comics Journal, Comics Feature, Starlog, Prevue, RBCC, The Comic World, The Comics Times and Aardvark-Vanaheim.
10. Please also send your suggestions for naming this award.
11. Balloting closes February 28, 1982.
12. Send your ballot to:

    David Craven
    1836 Glenwood Ave.
    Independence, MO 64052





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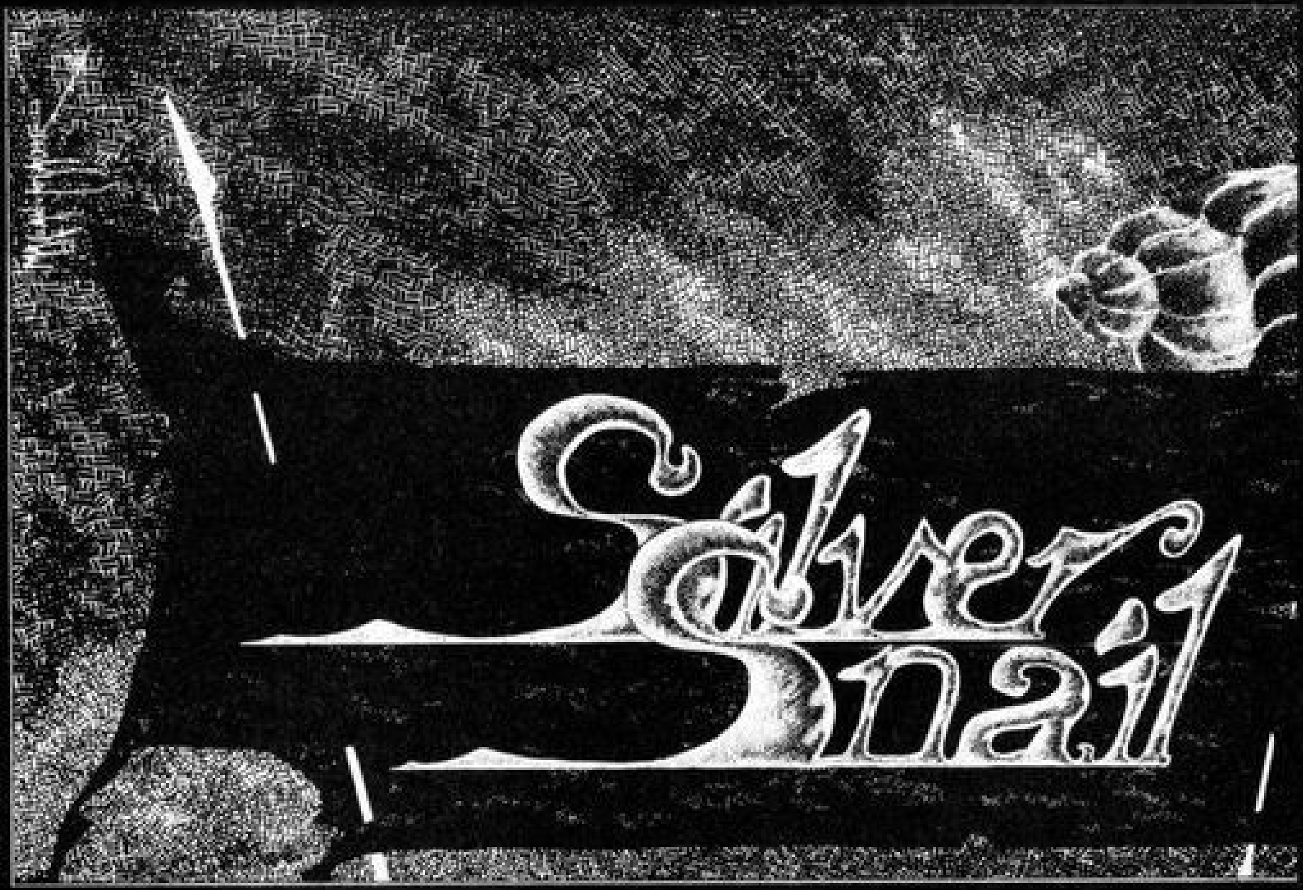
ACROSS CANADA AND AROUND THE WORLD



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PLUS ONE OF TORONTO'S LARGEST SELECTIONS

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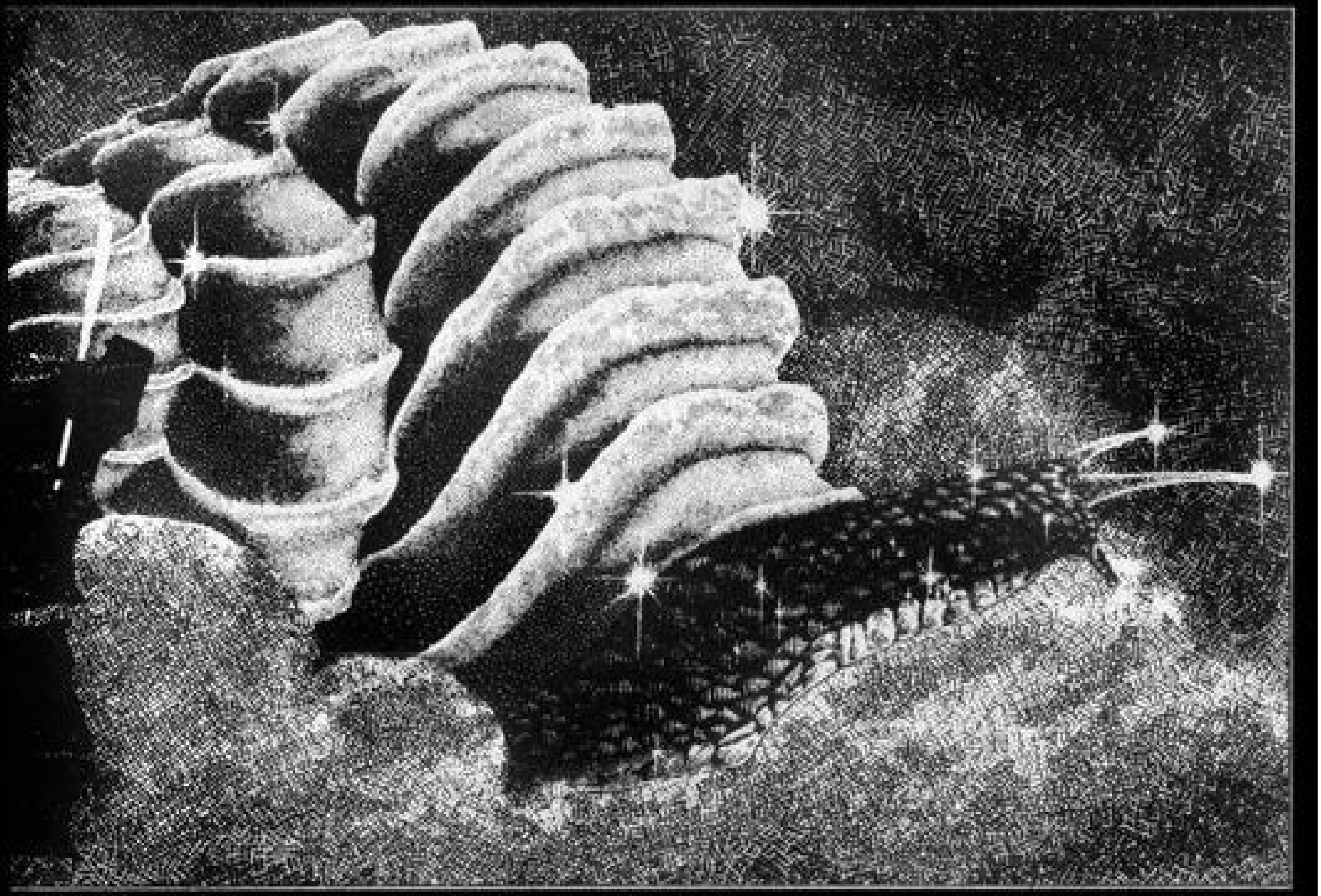
323 QUEEN ST. W., TORONTO, ON



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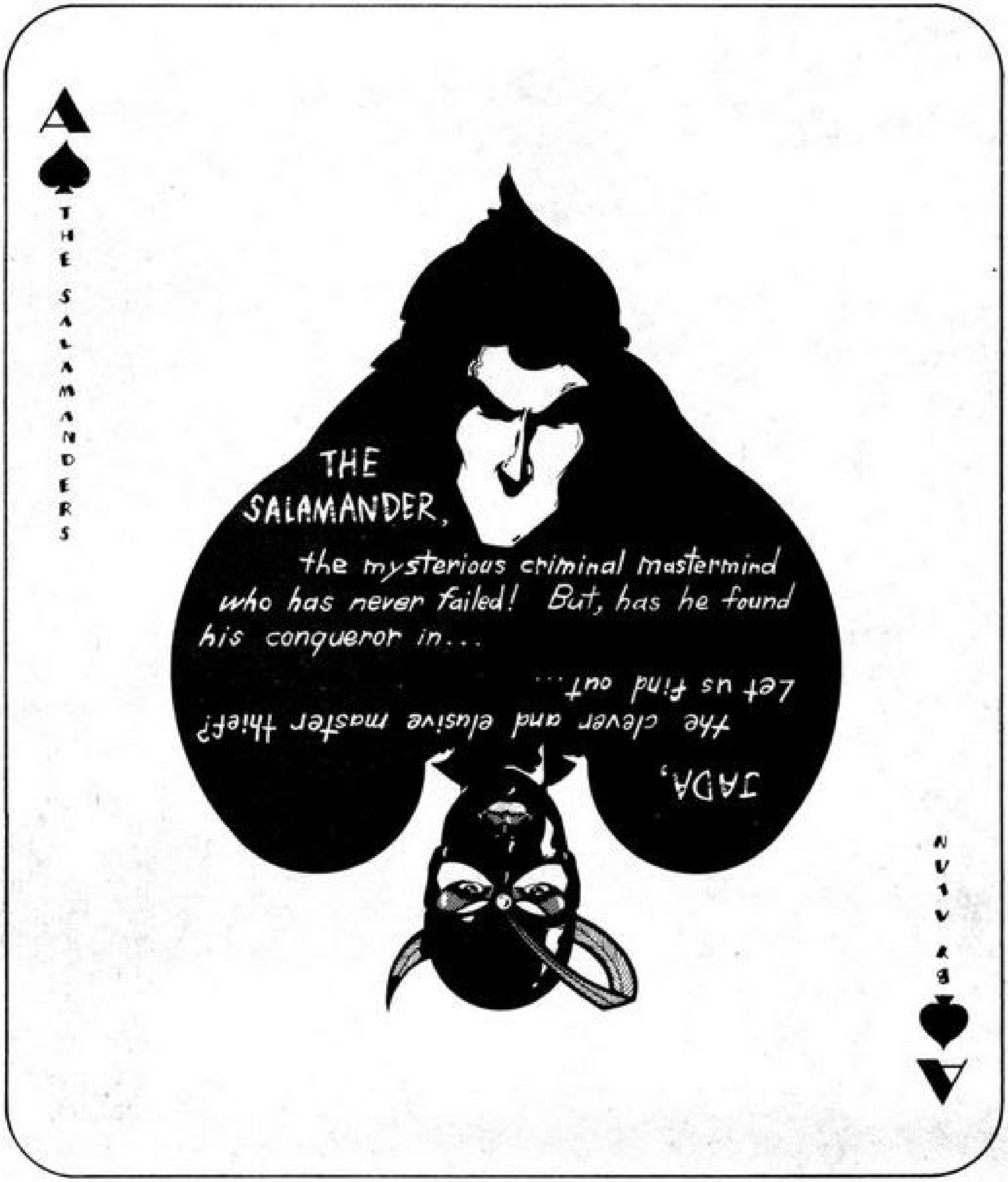
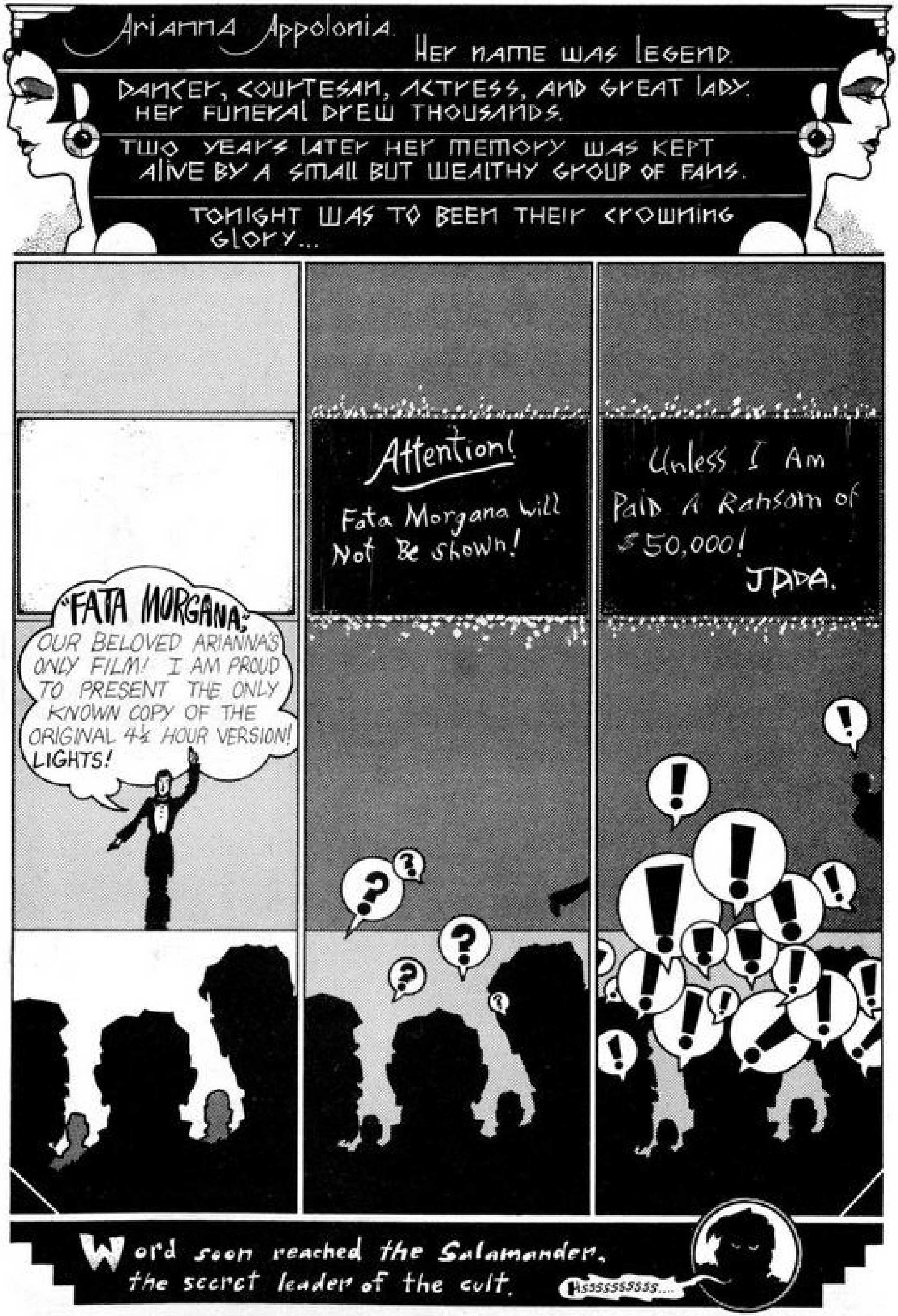
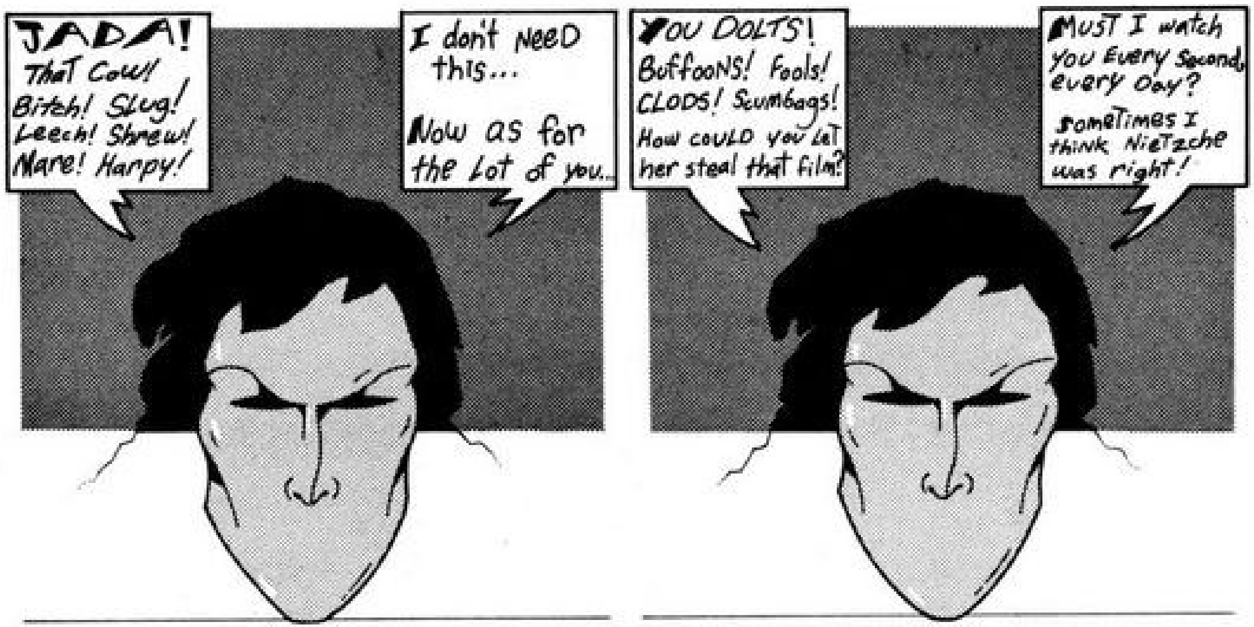
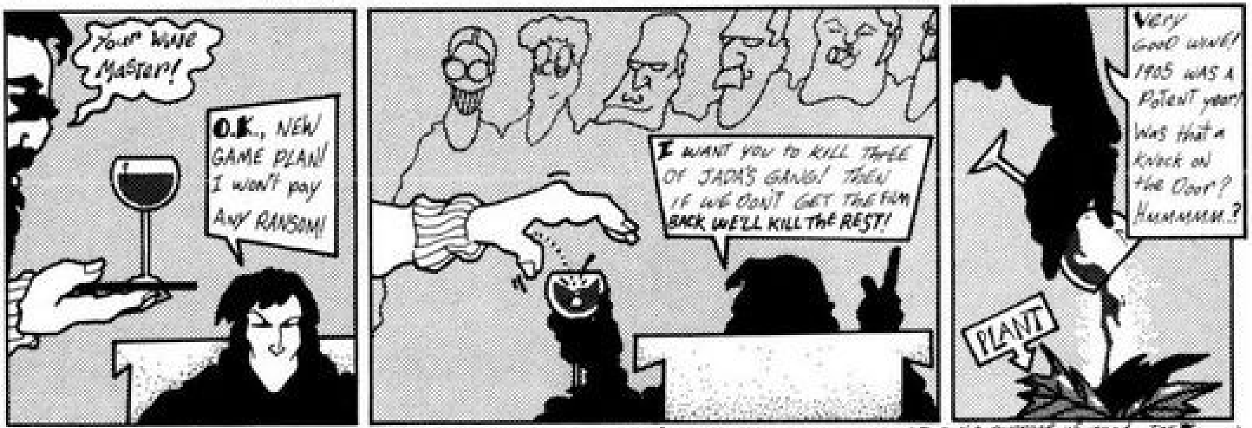
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

A UNIQUE STORY

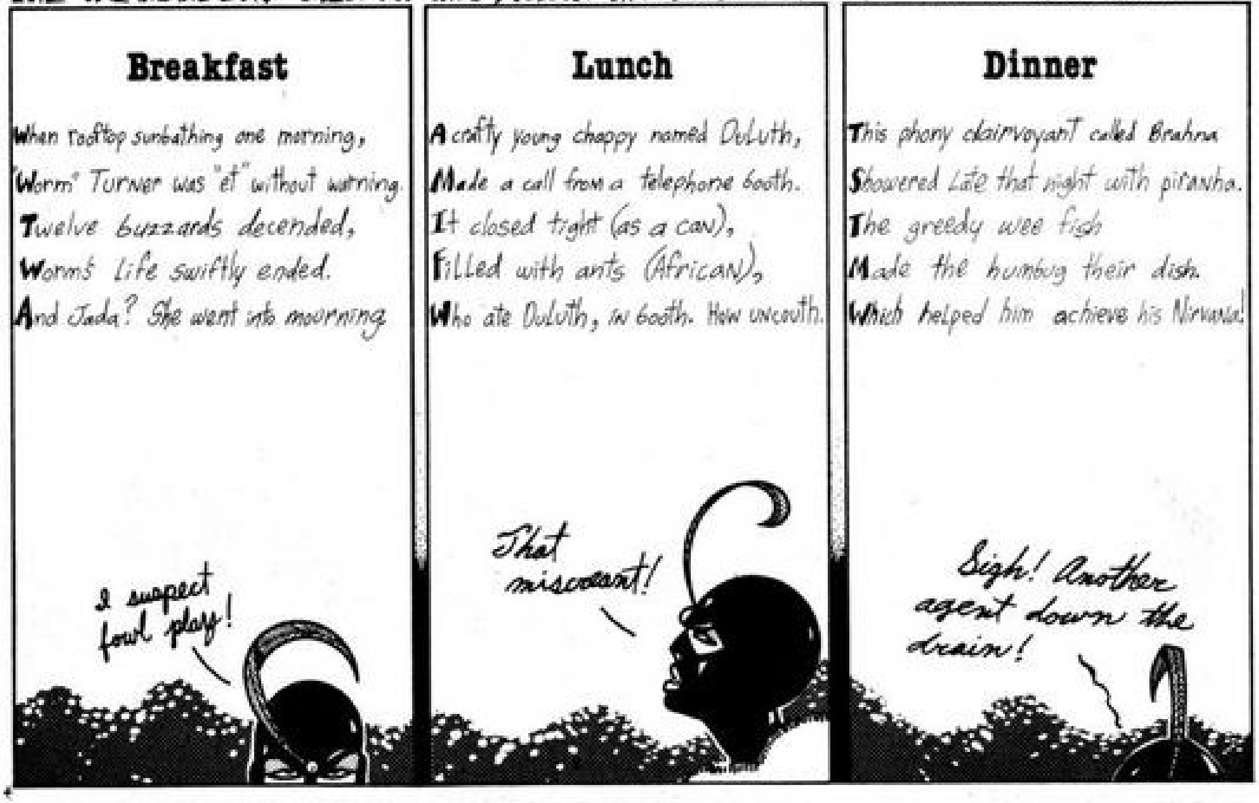

A
THE SALAMANDERS
THE SALAMANDER, the mysterious criminal mastermind who has never failed! But, has he found his conqueror in...
JADA, the clever and elusive master thief?
Let us find out...
BY ALAN
A


Arianna Appolonia. Her name was legend.
Dancer, courtesan, actress, and great lady. Her funeral drew thousands.
Two years later her memory was kept alive by a small but wealthy group of fans.
Tonight was to been their crowning glory...
"FATA MORGANA;" OUR BELOVED ARIANNA'S ONLY FILM! I AM PROUD TO PRESENT THE ONLY KNOWN COPY OF THE ORIGINAL 4½ HOUR VERSION! LIGHTS!
Attention! Fata Morgana will Not Be shown!
Unless I Am Paid A Ransom of $50,000! JADA.
Word soon reached the Salamander, the secret leader of the cult.
Hssssssssss....


JADA! That Cow! Bitch! Slug! Leech! Shrew! Mare! Harpy!
I don't need this... Now as for the lot of you...
YOU DOLTS! Buffoons! Fools! CLODS! Scumbags! How could you let her steal that film?
MUST I watch you every second, every day? Sometimes I think Nietzche was right!


Your Wine Master!
O.K., NEW GAME PLAN! I won't pay ANY RANSOM!
I WANT YOU TO KILL THREE OF JADA'S GANG! THEN IF WE DON'T GET THE FILM BACK WE'LL KILL THE REST!
Very Good wine! 1905 was a Potent year! Was that a knock on the Door? Hummmm..?
PLANT

THE SALAMANDER'S MEN PUT INTO MOTION HIS "MURDER MENU"! (For the purpose of good taste, it will be presented thus...)


I suspect fowl play!
That miscreant!
Sigh! Another agent down the drain!

Breakfast

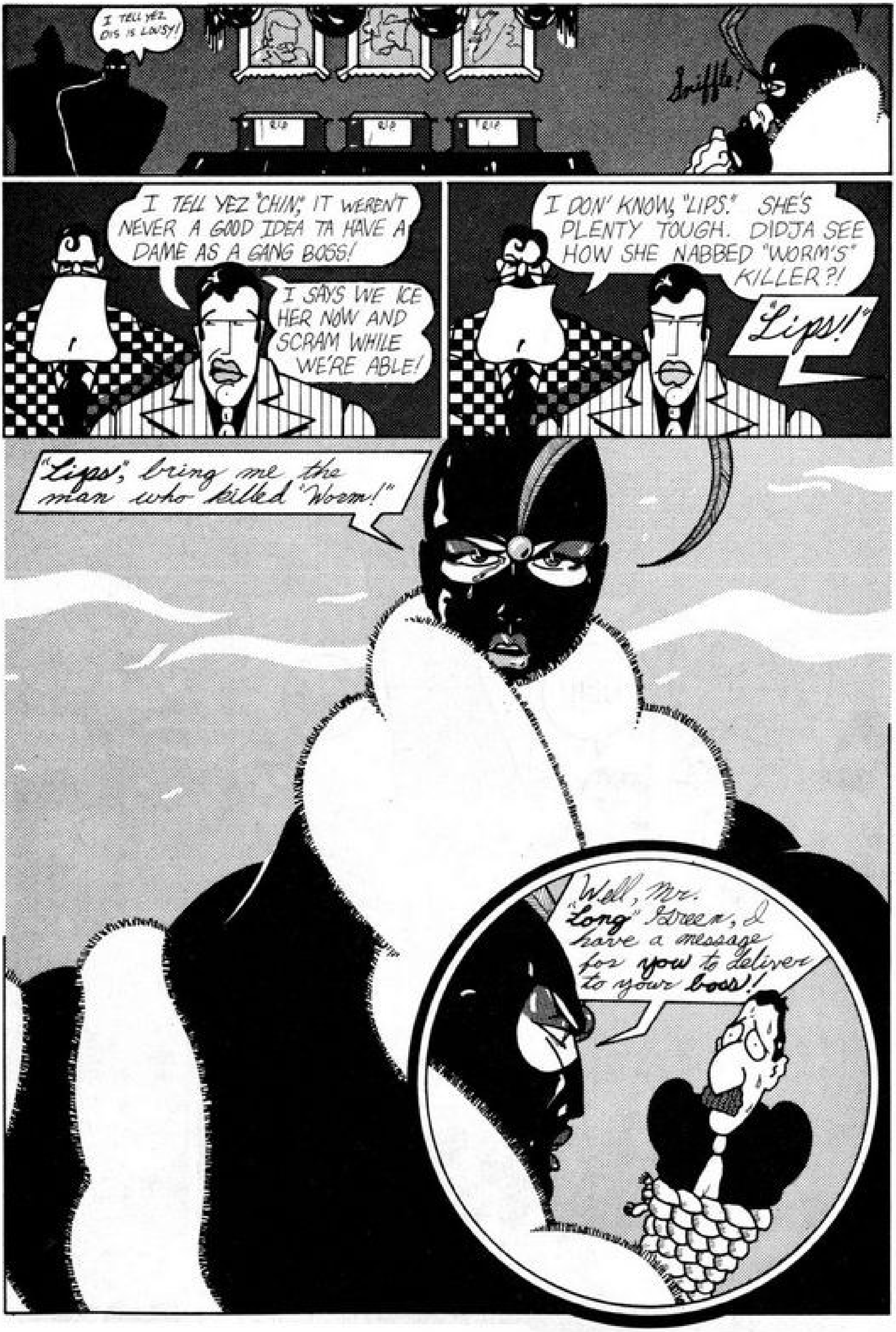
When rooftop sunbathing one morning,
"Worm" Turner was "et" without warning.
Twelve buzzards decended,
Worm's life swiftly ended.
And Jada? She went into mourning.

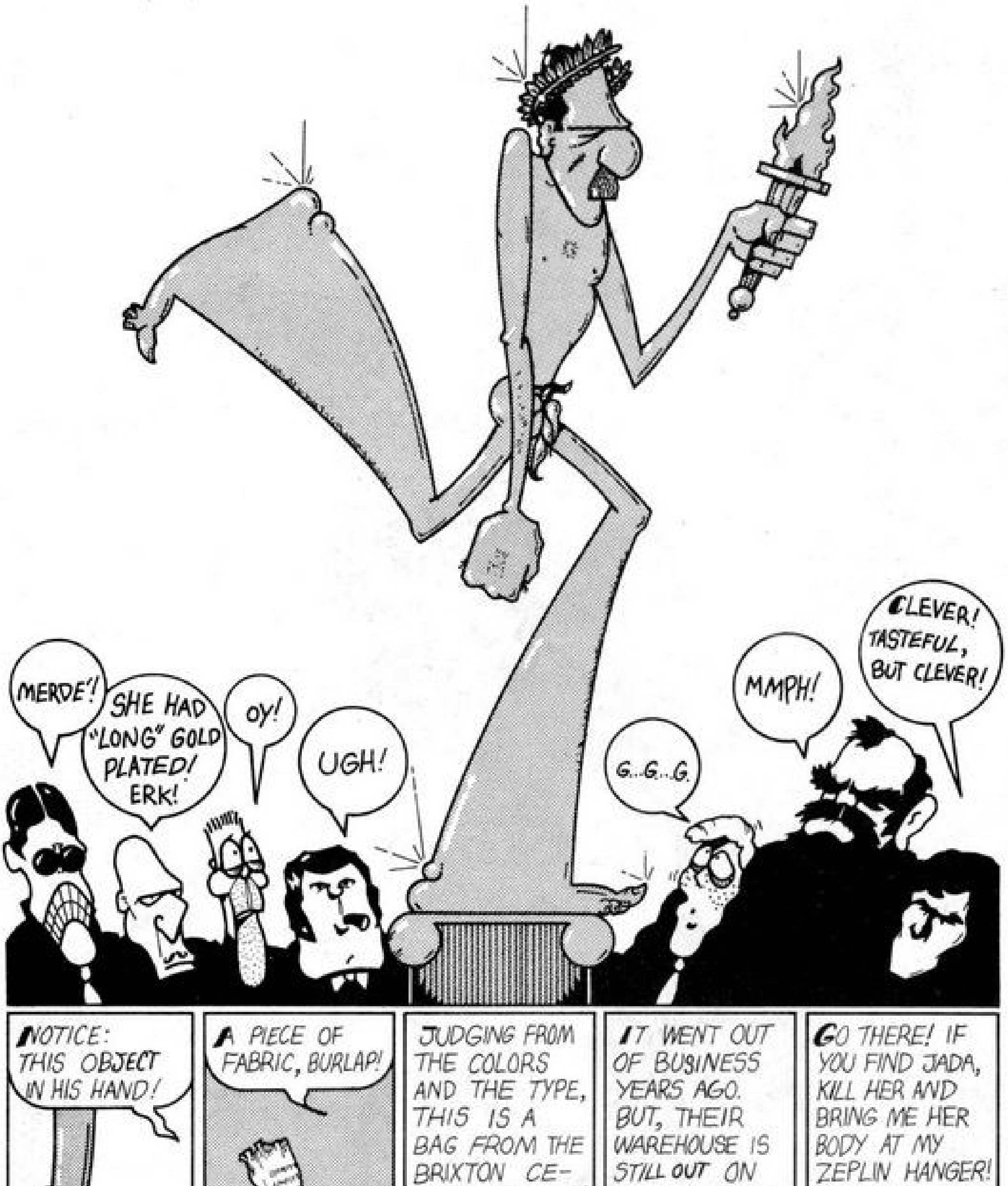
Lunch

A crafty young chappy named Duluth,
Made a call from a telephone booth.
It closed tight (as a can),
Filled with ants (African),
Who ate Duluth, in booth. How uncouth.

Dinner

This phony clairvoyant called Brahna
Showered late that night with piranha.
The greedy wee fish
Made the humbug their dish.
Which helped him achieve his Nirvana!


I TELL YEZ DIS IS LOUSY!
Sniffle!
I TELL YEZ "CHIN," IT WEREN'T NEVER A GOOD IDEA TA HAVE A DAME AS A GANG BOSS!
I SAYS WE ICE HER NOW AND SCRAM WHILE WE'RE ABLE!
I DON' KNOW, "LIPS." SHE'S PLENTY TOUGH. DIDJA SEE HOW SHE NABBED "WORM'S" KILLER?!
"Lips!"
"Lips", bring me the man who killed "Worm!"
Well, Mr. "Long" Green, I have a message for you to deliver to your boss!


MERDE'!
SHE HAD "LONG" GOLD PLATED! ERK!
OY!
UGH!
G...G...G.
MMPH!
CLEVER! TASTEFUL, BUT CLEVER!
NOTICE: THIS OBJECT IN HIS HAND!
A PIECE OF FABRIC, BURLAP!
JUDGING FROM THE COLORS AND THE TYPE, THIS IS A BAG FROM THE BRIXTON CEMENT COMPANY!
IT WENT OUT OF BUSINESS YEARS AGO. BUT, THEIR WAREHOUSE IS STILL OUT ON THE EDGE OF TOWN!
GO THERE! IF YOU FIND JADA, KILL HER AND BRING ME HER BODY AT MY ZEPLIN HANGER! AND PUT "LONG" OUT IN THE GARDEN FOR THE BIRDS!

CONCLUSION IN ISSUE 33

ISSN 0229-0103

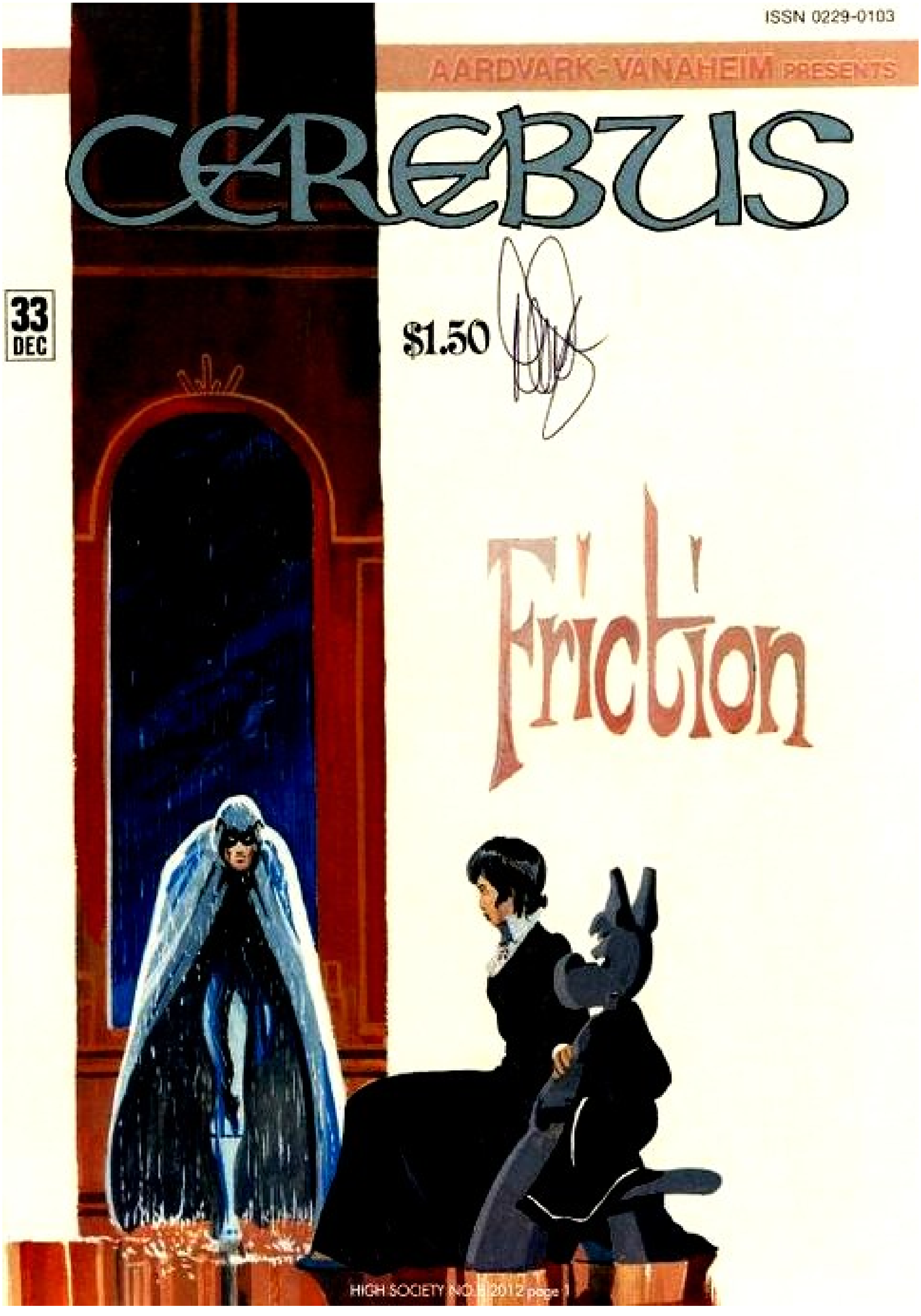
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

33
DEC

$1.50

Friction



A Note from the Publisher

It's December . . . the end of another year. Somehow - last January feels like a long way off. That was issue No. 24. It *was* a long time ago. Just looking at the art - it looks (to me) like a completely different book. All of this really makes me wonder where we will be next year at this time. (Sunning ourselves on a beautiful Hawaiian beach? Fat chance!! It's hard to ink, when sand keeps getting in your brush.) The covers have sure evolved a lot. Issue No. 23 was Dave's first try at a painted cover. It amazes me all the time how much Dave learns as he goes along. It amazes me how much I learn. Come to think of it, I've noticed a lot of our fans growing with us. Gee - do you think any of us will grow up some day.

On to other things. The diamondback decks are ready to go out. That's the signed and numbered set of 100. A few orders have trickled in (that's not true, we get a few each day.) in response to our ad in The Buyer's Guide. But since you don't all subscribe to The Buyer's Guide, this is to let everyone know that they are available. I did tell you that I would let you know when I was ready, so here you are. So don't everyone send in their orders at once or we will never get the next issue off the ground. Actually, by the time you read this I should have everything organized enough for you to start sending them in. Now that I have an office and everything just like a *real* publisher!! Dave's already started designing the next deck of cards for next year, so I had to get organized to keep up with all the "doo-dads" that he thinks up for us to do. If I want to keep up, I'd better wrap up this issue and get it to the printers. So I'll see you all next issue!!

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 33 DECEMBER, 1981

Publisher
Deni Sim

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Bud Plant Inc.
P.O. Box 1886
Grass Valley, CA
95945

Pacific Comics
P.O. Box 99217
San Diego, CA
92109

Glenwood Distribution
124 Vandalia St.
Collinsville, IL
62234

Capital City Distributors
2827 Perry Street
Madison, Wisconsin
53713

Styx Comic Service
Box 3791, Stn. B.
Winnipeg, Man., Canada
R2W 3R6

Now & Then Books
103 Queen St. South
Kitchener, Ont.
N2G 1W1

New Media/Irjax
12345 Starkey Road
Largo, Florida
33543

Titan Distributors
P.O. Box 250
London, E3 4RT
England

Cerebus Fan Club
c/o Fred Patten
11863 West Jefferson Blvd.
Culver City, California
90230
Membership ..... $8.00 per year

Advertising (design)
Abraxas Studio
Richard Bruning
P.O. Box 1606
Madison, Wisconsin
53701

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published fifteen times a year by Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc., P.O. Box 1674 Station 'C', Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2, including three "Swords of Cerebus" in winter, spring and fall. All contents © 1981 Dave Sim. Any inquiries regarding use of the characters, images, or situations depicted should be addressed to Deni Sim. No unauthorized reproduction allowed except for review or other Journalistic purpose. Advertising rates furnished on request. Printed in Canada by Preney Print & Litho Inc., Windsor, Ontario.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,

I have recently seen your ads for "Swords of Cerebus No. 3" and feel a need to make a comment on No.'s 1 & 2.

I ordered No. 1 when it was first presented for sale to the general public having enjoyed Cerebus No.'s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. I bought No.'s 1-3 and 6-8 at the same time at Last Gasp Eco Funnies in San Francisco California. When I returned there six months later I picked up No. 5 & 9-11. I have since gotten "Cerebus" through Bud Plant's distributing system over the two years.

Not having seen "Swords of Cerebus No. 1" I was not only hoping to see what was in issue No. 4 of "Cerebus", but get hold of No.'s 1-3 on better paper than the original press run was printed on. No such luck.

Due to the higher cost of the book than what I had payed for issues No. 5-8, I decied not to buy "Swords of Cerebus No. 2". Reason being that I own all but the cover (and yet I have the 4 originals) and an 8 page story.

Now my complaint is not just an 'it cost too much' complaint, in that I would be willing to pay more for quality paper, otherwise my interest in these "best of" books is less than strong.

I feel that it is sad such tacky production on your part has made me feel that I should write, because Cerebus has progressed and grown up until the "Swords" books. I only hope that you and Deni are not trying to over extend your talent and funds to where no one cares anymore, or business has to cease.

Lynn Hansen
536 E. 13th
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Our intention with "Swords" is to get to the point where all the Cerebus stories are available and in print at a reasonable cost. It is the "reasonable cost" part that dictates printing on newsprint (although we are using a better grade of newsprint that most publications starting with Swords No. 3). I sympathise with long-time Cerebus collectors who are paying five dollars for a new cover, short story and introductions. I'd recommend that you not buy the book if it doesn't contain enough to be worth your while.

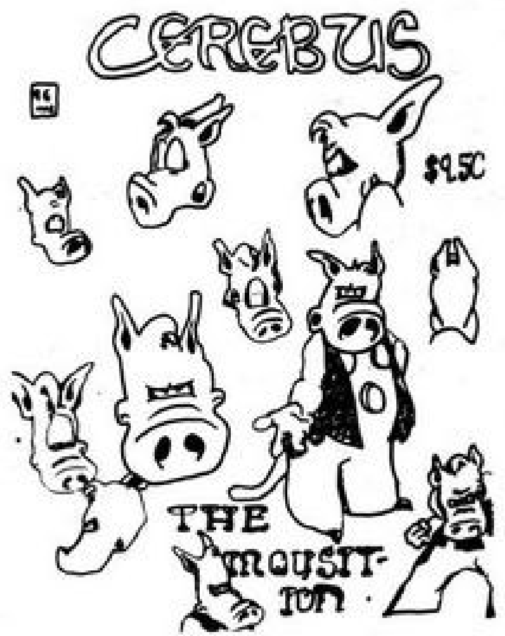
Dear Mr. Sim,

It is with great pleasure every month that I fork up a buck-fifty, and if it keeps something like Cerebus going, it is well worth it. However, as much as I would like, I don't want to write just another the-best-thing-I-ever-read-in-my-whole-life letter, though that would probably be a good shot at getting a letter printed.

Instead I would like to discuss the matter of the type of book CEREBUS THE AARDVARK, EARTHPIG BORN is. Well, you don't seem to concentrate on art alone, nor fantastic plot, explicit action, cohesive background, nor the funniest you are capable of. Instead you do it all in the best possible manner of any "comic book" (poor term though YOURS is comic, and a book). What I am wondering at is the fact that, after four years of collecting comic books from the major companies, I have found them all to be unsatisfying in content, for fifty cents. Instead, I buy one about a grey, furry, biped for three times the money, from a company that VERY few people (actually, not really a company) have ever heard of. I also buy one about a group of about a dozen elves, for a similar price, from a publishing group of equivilent size. If THESE are so small, how can THEY be so big? Ah, maybe it's best that way; not for you, but for us the fans. After all, why should we hundreds upon hundreds have to share the Aardvarkian Age with thousands upon thousands?

Eric Crawford
7724 Palmyra Drive
Fair Oaks, Calif. 95628

I hate to disillusion you, Eric; but you've been sharing Cerebus with thousands upon thousands since around issue three. The hundreds and hundreds are still with us, if that's any consolation. An interesting side-note -- Eric's "INQUISITION" cover arrived just as I was started drawing No. 31 which introduced IEST's Inquisition.



Dear Dave:

Don't go on strike. I realise that you must be under a lot of pressure from the various unions, but don't knuckle under. Somehow I suspect that the only forces holding the nomadic apocalypse at arms length are unemployment compensation and Cerebus. Then, after a visit to the unemployment office, I realised that Cerebus is the Last Bastian of Reason. May he stem the tide of insanity FOREVER.

(Slow fadeout of Cerebus peering grimly into the mist with cloak billowing impressively).

Ken Rasmussen
1324 Humbolt St.
Bellingham, WA 98225

Howzabout if he just stems the tide of insanity for another two hundred and sixty-seven issues and then goes somewhere to lie down for a while?

Dear Mr. Sim,

I am taking a tremendous chance writing this letter. I read in your introduction to Cerebus, Vol. 1 "Write a Dear Dave letter and mail it and you can count on a handwritten Dave Sim reply sometime after Hell freezes over." Well, I'll be brief then.

I can't get enough of your funny little aardvark, and while the world breathlessly awaits Swords of Cerebus, Vol. 3 and Cerebus No. 30, I would venture to ask if perchance there is a sketch or two kicking around the floor of the Sim household that you might consent to sell to a neighbour over here in sunny Quebec (yes, some of us are English). I would be tremendously appreciative if you would.

Well that's all I have to say except keep up the good work and don't lose any of your genius.

Chris Houston
33 Sunnydale Rd.,
Dollard des Ormeaux, P.Q. H9B 1E3

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

This seems to be as good a time as any to explain to all and sundry that there is absolutely no way we can send a drawing to everyone who wants one. It is not a matter of turning scrap paper into cash (which most people seem to view as an irresistible temptation). The production of Cerebus and Swords entails a great deal of concentration and effort for Deni and I. Most of Deni's job involves juggling thirty different steps that have to be done in a precise order month in and month out. There-is-no-time. Whenever (in a moment of weakness) we have agreed to send a piece of artwork to someone, it has ended up being more trouble than money could possibly offset . . . and it has ended up taking months to get the package sent.

To pay Chris back for embarrassing him out here in public, I'm going to send him a drawing.

You can expect it sometime after today, Chris.

Dear Dave and Deni,

Here is a rip-off warning. You may have heard that Citadel Miniatures has produced a new fantasy wargames figure, WF Aggressive Aardvark Advancing. However, a little background information might be useful. At the A.G.M. of the Pike and Shot Society last April, I met Brian Ansell. At that time he was the figure designer for Citadel. He had with him a batch of workshop sweepings - test figures and the like - which he was selling off cheaply to Society members. We share an interest in comics as well as war-gaming, so I was talking to him for some time while picking over the figures. Then I came upon this figure of an aardvark in a little waistcoat (in England a vest is what you wear under your shirt) with a sword in his paw and three medallions around his neck. I enquired mildly if some licensing agreement had been made. No, he said, but it didn't matter. If I understood him aright, he said that this was one of a private batch he'd made up for friends. He also said that he was leaving Citadel within the next few days to work for Table Top Miniatures. Shortly after this we both skipped the business side of the meeting in favour of popping round the corner to the bi-monthly Comic Mart which, by a happy coincidence, was being held that day.

Imagine my surprise, therefore, when Citadel released the figure a few months later. I didn't want to accuse anyone on inadequate information, but I didn't have Brian's address to discuss the matter. I waited until I saw him at another games show a couple of weeks ago and questioned him. Now his story is that the mold *was* made for Citadel before he left them. Indeed, he said that he had also produced six other aardvarks for them, including a female, a priest, and a magician and (I should have a sick-bag for this one) a highland aardvark in a kilt and bonnet. Yesterday I saw the last two of these and there is an excellent case for making them extinct.

Citadel Miniatrues is owned by Games Workshop Ltd., the current fat cats of the English wargaming business, and has a licensing agreement to produce the figures of Ral Partha, the big U.S. figure manufacturer. All are making large amounts of money by all accounts. The workshop has been getting the sort of sycophantic little notice in the press which all up and coming concerns usually attract. They are in short, well able to afford a donation to poor but honest artists, but I don't see any way you could suffer by asking for one. Even if you get a rude reply, you could worry them, and generate some bad publicity for GW. So if you feel like crying havoc and letting slip the 'varks of war, there is a few useful addresses on the next page. In particular RAFM, whatever it is hiding behind that P.O. Box number, has just been appointed Citadel's Canadian manufacturer. Hit them before they can dig in.

Games Workshop Limited, 27-29 Sunbeam Road, Park Royal, London, NWIO 6JP, England.

Citadel Miniatures, 10 Victoria Street, Newark, Notts, England

Citadel Miniatures U.S., Inc., P.O. Box 12352, Cincinnati, Ohio 45212

RAFM Company, P.O. Box 62, Paris, Ontario N3L 3E5

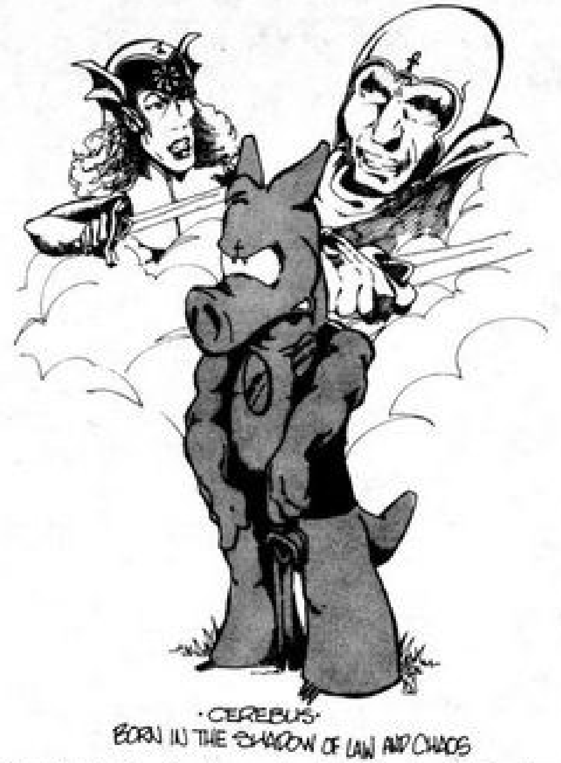
and just in case you need Ral Partha's address, it will be in any American fantasy gamining mags, (The Dragon is pathetic in content, but most widely available.) I'm afraid I don't have a recent, reliable address from any English source.

Brian Ansell can be contacted care of Tabletop Games - 53 Mansfield Road, Daybrook, Nottingham, England.

It would be pleasant to turn from these sordid matters to the more enjoyable business of writing a typical fan letter - telling you how good recent issues of Cerebus are, making flattering comparisons with everything from the Altamira cave paintings to Mervyn Peake's drawings, all the usual ego reinforcement. Unfortunately, I can't. The latest issue I have is number 24. Your distribution seems to be like a fishing rod over the Atlantic. If you hiccup, our end jumps a mile into the air; if you have a real struggle, the line breaks. Our biggest London shop, Forbidden Planet, usually has about ten copies of each of your latest dozen or so issues on the shelves. When I was last in three week ago, they had nothing, and no idea when their next shipment would arrive. We can endure the depression and unemployment, but no Cerebus since last winter really strikes home. The knife gets an extra twist when we read these smug little publication announcements in the back of the Comics Journal, for things we will wait months to see. Come along now. Fingers out and get the Red Cross to send us Cerebus parcels. May your next year's efforts go as smoothly as you wish.

I.G.S. Curtis
63 Weybridge Mead
Yateley, Camberley
Surrey GU17 7UX

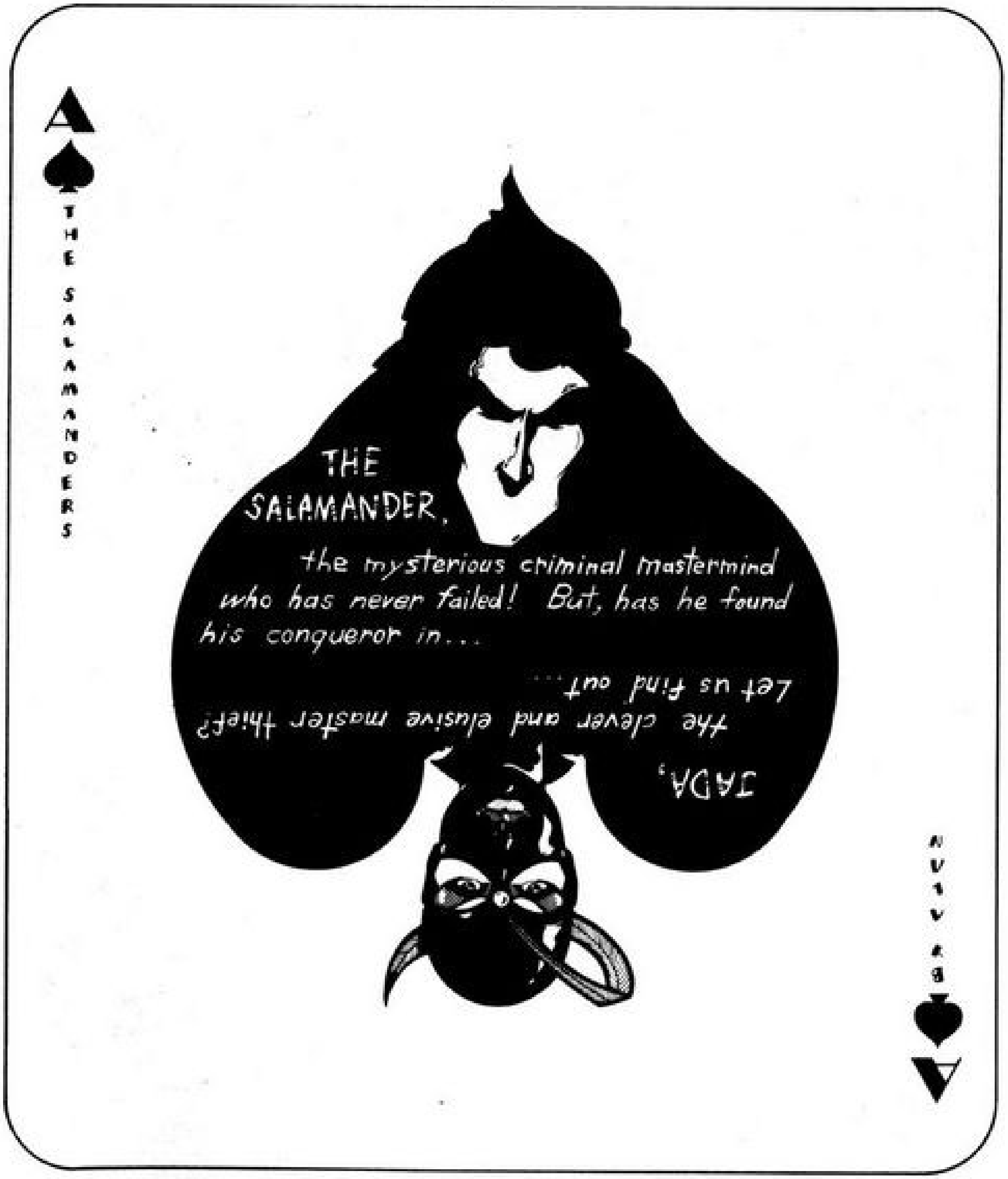
This was sent to "Aardvark Comment" which is why I am printing it. The miniatures mentioned in the letter are definitely unauthorized and we'd appreciate it if you folks would refrain from spending your money on them. Deni? Another one for the lawyers.


·CEREBUS·
BORN IN THE SHADOW OF LAW AND CHAOS

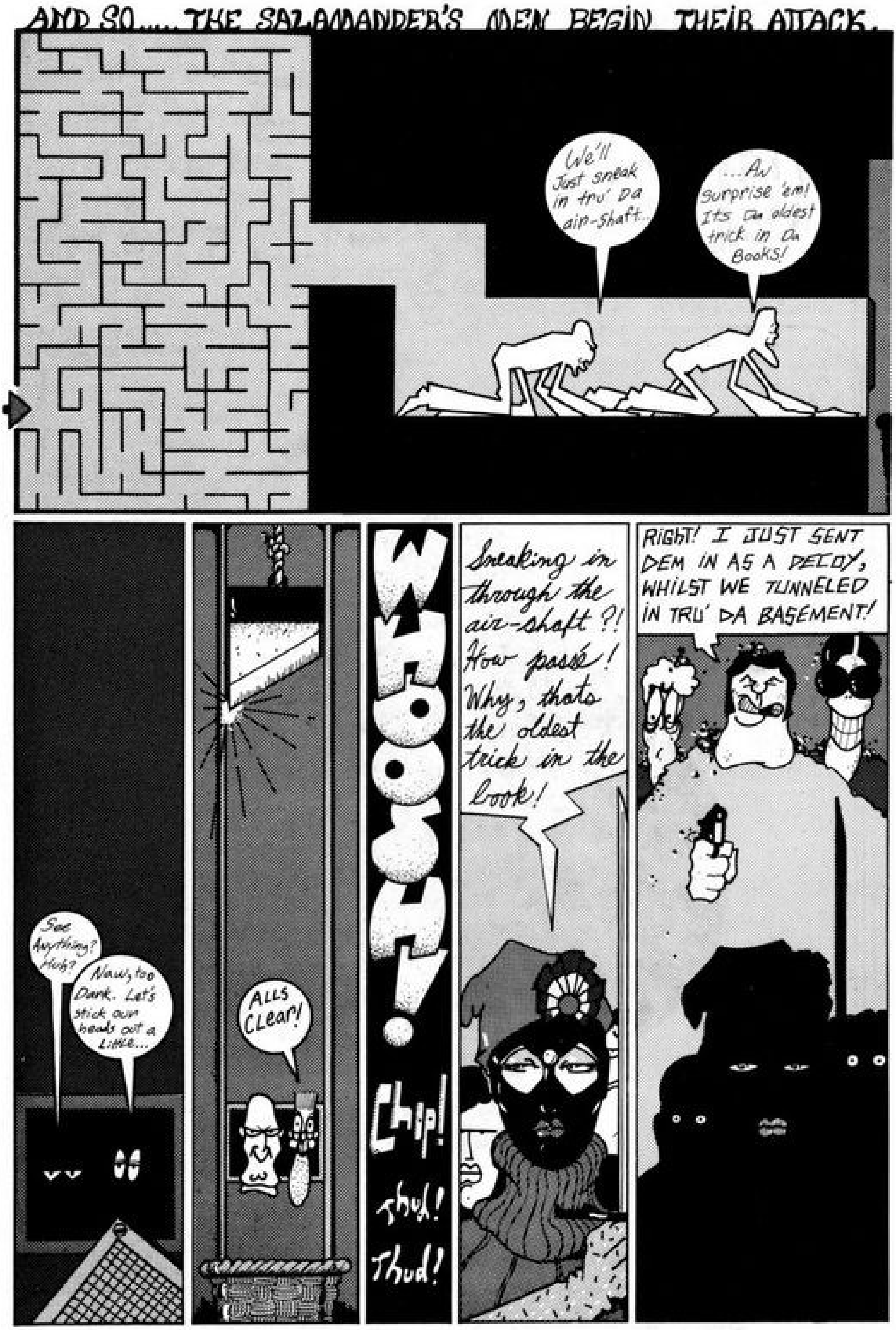
Submitted by Don Goodrum of Lookin' Goodrum Productions, St. Charles, Mo.

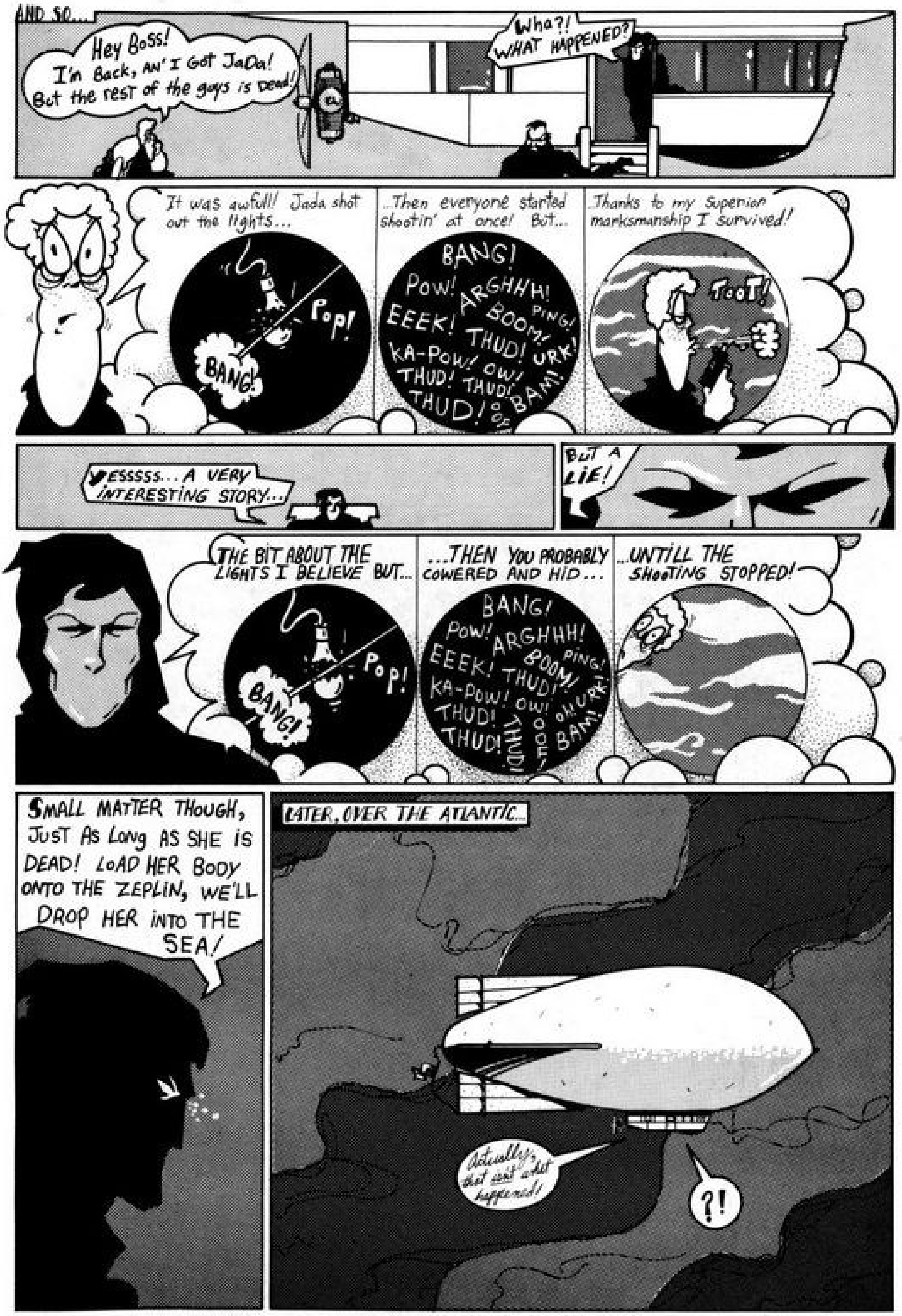
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

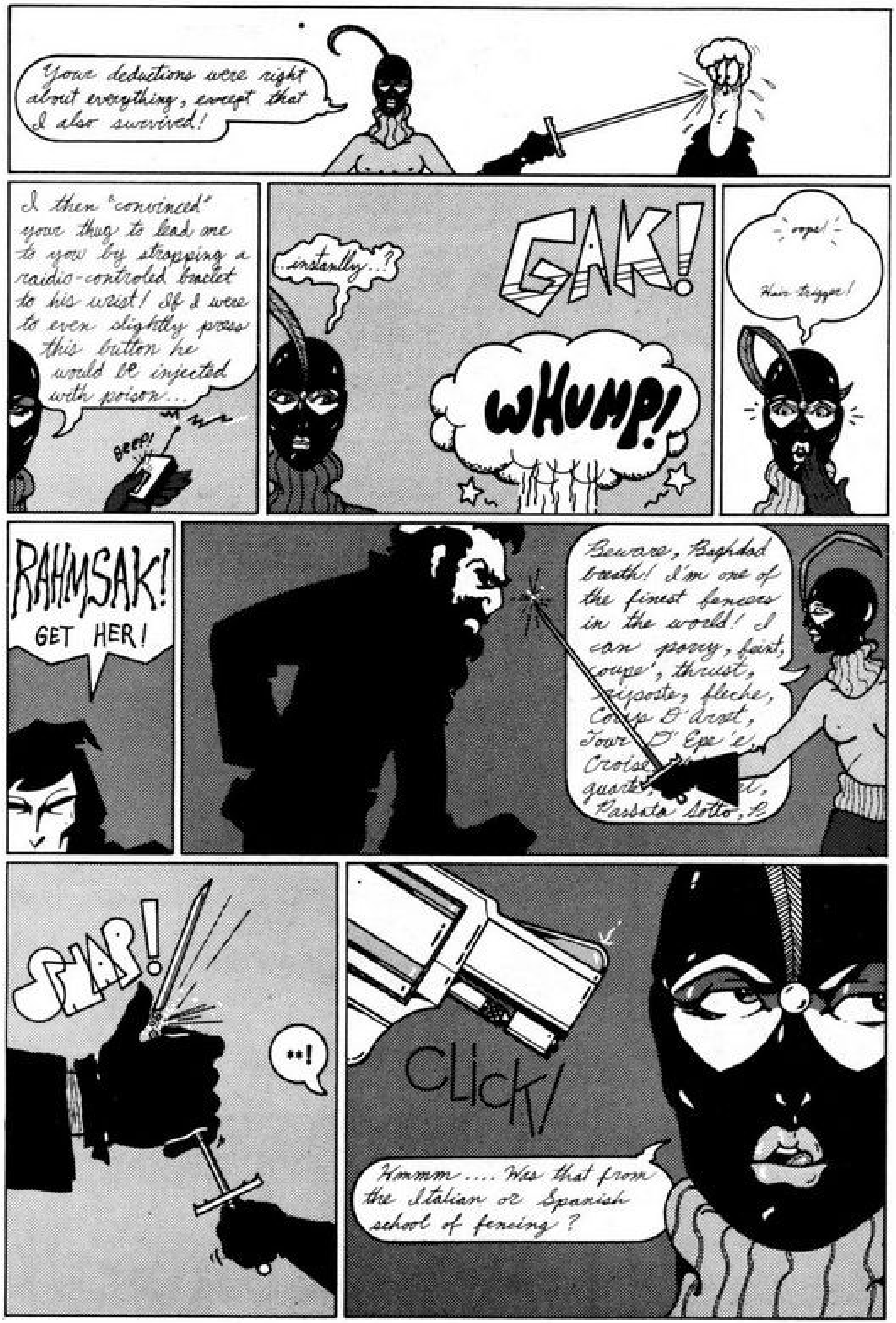
A UNIQUE STORY

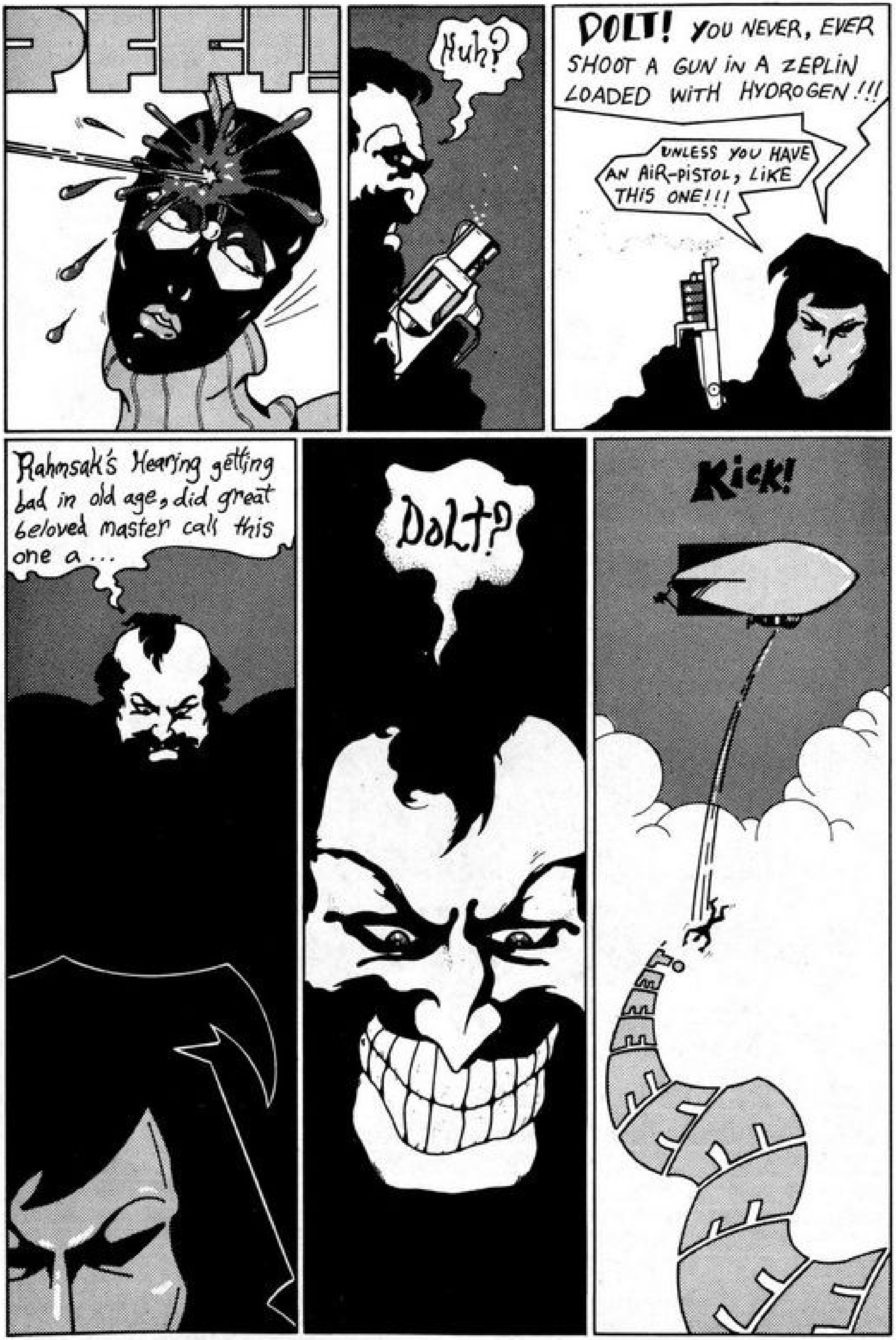

A
THE SALAMANDERS
THE SALAMANDER, the mysterious criminal mastermind who has never failed! But, has he found his conqueror in...
JADA, the clever and elusive master thief? Let us find out...

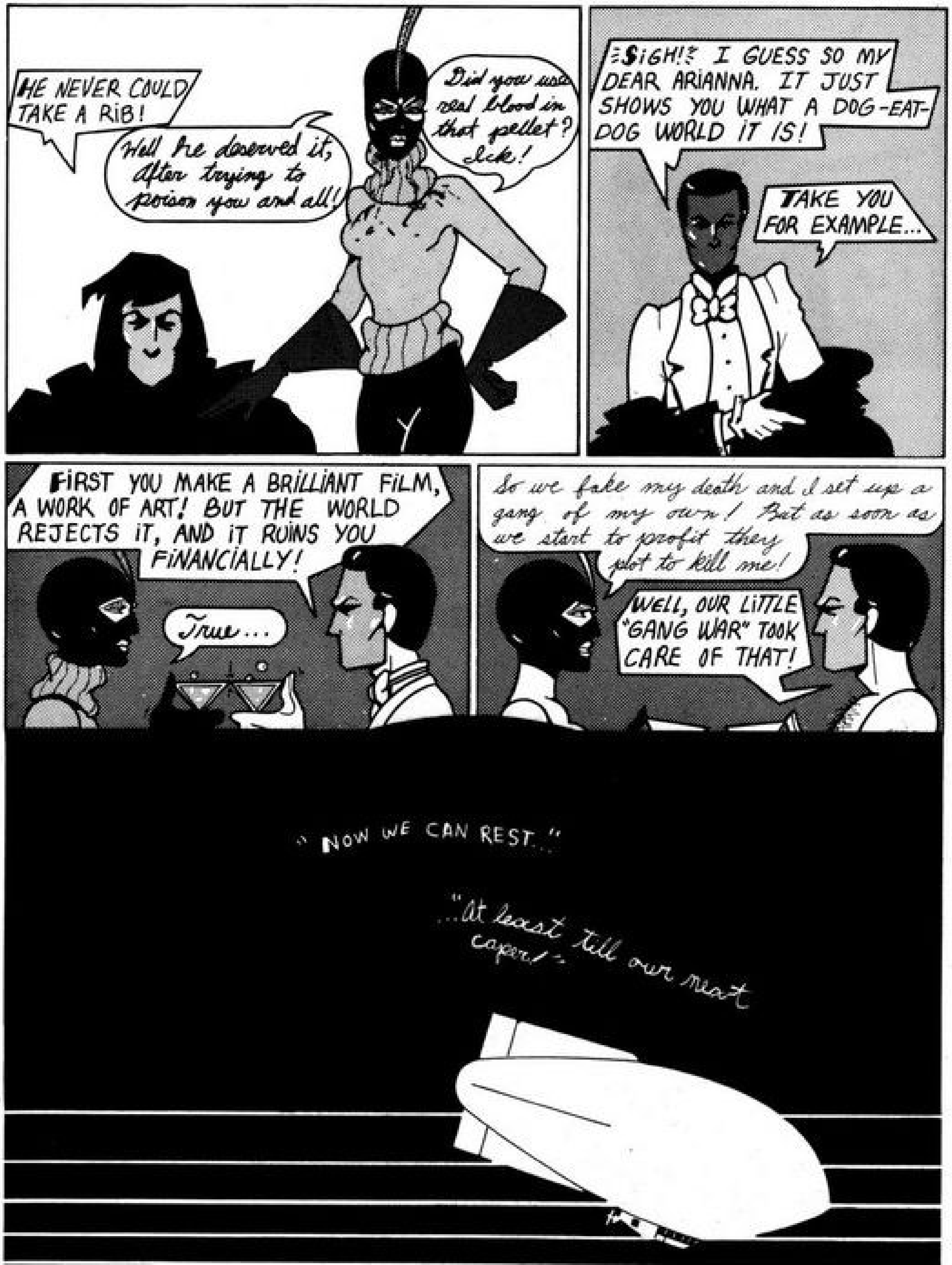
Story and Art by Brent Alan Richardson


AND SO.... THE SALAMANDER'S MEN BEGIN THEIR ATTACK.
We'll Just sneak in tru' Da air-Shaft..
...An' Surprise 'em! Its Da oldest trick in Da Books!
See Anything? Huh?
Naw, too Dark. Let's stick our heads out a Little...
ALLS CLear!
WHOOSH!
Chip!
Thud! Thud!
Sneaking in through the air-shaft?! How passé! Why, thats the oldest trick in the book!
RIGHT! I JUST SENT DEM IN AS A DECOY, WHILST WE TUNNELED IN TRU' DA BASEMENT!


AND SO...
Hey Boss! I'm Back, AN' I Got JaDa! But the rest of the guys is Dead!
Wha?! WHAT HAPPENED?
It was awful! Jada shot out the lights...
Pop!
BANG!
..Then everyone started shootin' at once! But...
BANG! POW! ARGHHH! PING! BOOM! EEEK! THUD! KA-POW! URK! THUD! OW! THUD! THUD! OOF! BAM!
..Thanks to my superior marksmanship I survived!
TOOT!
YESSSSS... A VERY INTERESTING STORY...
BUT A LIE!
THE BIT ABOUT THE LIGHTS I BELIEVE BUT...
Pop!
BANG!
...THEN YOU PROBABLY COWERED AND HID...
BANG! POW! ARGHHH! PING! BOOM! EEEK! THUD! KA-POW! OW! URK! OH! THUD! THUD! THUD! OOF! BAM!
...UNTILL THE SHOOTING STOPPED!
SMALL MATTER THOUGH, JUST AS LONG AS SHE IS DEAD! LOAD HER BODY ONTO THE ZEPLIN, WE'LL DROP HER INTO THE SEA!
LATER, OVER THE ATLANTIC...
Actually, that isn't what happened!
?!


Your deductions were right about everything, except that I also survived!
I then "convinced" your thug to lead me to you by strapping a raidio-controled braclet to his wrist! If I were to even slightly press this button he would be injected with poison...
BEEP!
...instantly...?
GAK!
wHUMP!
oops!
Hair trigger!
RAHMSAK! GET HER!
Beware, Baghdad breath! I'm one of the finest fences in the world! I can parry, faint, coupe', thrust, riposte, fleche, Coup D'Arrot, Tour D'Epe'e, Croise, quarte, Passata Sotto,
SNAP!
**!
CLICK!
Hmmm.... Was that from the Italian or Spanish school of fensing?


PFFT!
Huh?
DOLT! YOU NEVER, EVER SHOOT A GUN IN A ZEPLIN LOADED WITH HYDROGEN!!!
UNLESS YOU HAVE AN AIR-PISTOL, LIKE THIS ONE!!!
Rahmsak's Hearing getting bad in old age, did great beloved master call this one a...
Dolt?
KICK!


HE NEVER COULD TAKE A RIB!
Well he deserved it, After trying to poison you and all!
Did you use real blood in that pellet? Ick!
≡SIGH!≡ I GUESS SO MY DEAR ARIANNA. IT JUST SHOWS YOU WHAT A DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD IT IS!
TAKE YOU FOR EXAMPLE...
FIRST YOU MAKE A BRILLIANT FILM, A WORK OF ART! BUT THE WORLD REJECTS IT, AND IT RUINS YOU FINANCIALLY!
True...
So we fake my death and I set up a gang of my own! But as soon as we start to profit they plot to kill me!
WELL, OUR LITTLE "GANG WAR" TOOK CARE OF THAT!
"NOW WE CAN REST..."
..."At least till our next caper!"

copyright 19[illegible] by Alan Richardson

THE END.

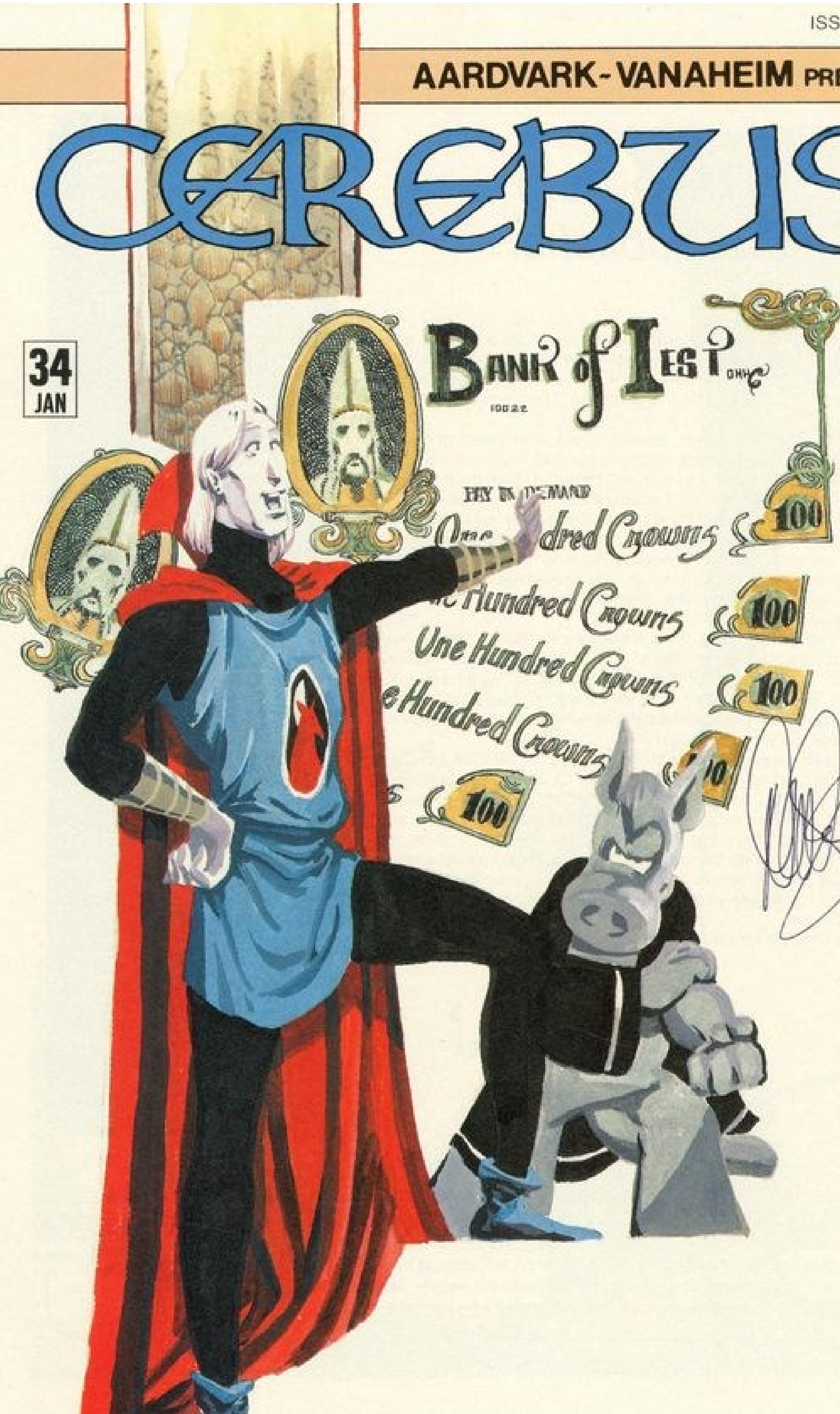
ISSN 0229-0103

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

34
JAN

$1.50


Bank of Iest
Pay on demand
One Hundred Crowns
One Hundred Crowns
One Hundred Crowns
One Hundred Crowns
100
100
100
100
100

A Note from the Publisher

I looked at the number of this issue and I did a double-take. We're almost at issue forty!! Last New Year we hadn't even started with the Swords of Cerebus Volumes, or even begun thinking of the cards and the portfolio. It's been a very busy year.

In the back of this issue, there are lots of interesting things. First of all, we have a new artist for our back-up feature -- Bill Loebs. Dave and I first met him in London, Ontario a few years back at the London Annual Fantasy and Media Festival (LAFF). We were both impressed by his story that appeared in Nucleus, No. 1 ("Abortion") and I have been thinking about ways for Bill's work to be seen by more people ever since then. The obvious solution was to try and publish him ourselves. It's also nice when ever I can get the chance to encourage another writer/artist at his craft.

We have gotten very little response so far to Brent Alan Richardson's two-part story "The Salamanders" which appeared in the back of No. 32 and No. 33. What are your feelings? Would you like to see more? I'd really appreciate hearing from you. I'd also like to hear how you feel about having these back-up stories in Cerebus.

Also, in this issue, there is an ad for the pins that the JayCees are putting out this year. The New York Chapter has been using Cerebus as their mascot, this year. (With our permission, of course.) Dave and I received our pins in the mail with the ad, and I must say that they are really beautiful. I wear mine on my jacket. The colour on them is really the best that I've ever seen. It is obvious that someone has spent some time on these. If you like pins, I'd suggest you look into this. They are a real bargain at five dollars.

That's about it for this issue. I'll see you all again next month!!

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 34 JANUARY, 1982

Publisher
Deni Sim

Distributors:
Bud Plant Inc.
P.O. Box 1886
Grass Valley, CA
95945

Pacific Comics
P.O. Box 99217
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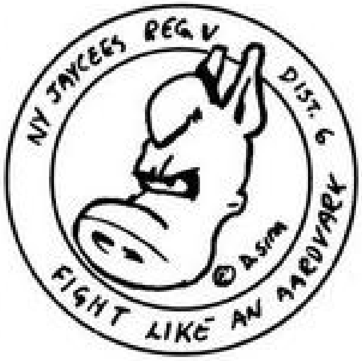
LIMITED-EDITION CEREBUS PIN

The Jaycees is a national leadership training organization for young men. Each year, state, regional and local chapters issue enamelled pins which the members wear and trade. Many pins are quite sought-after and almost none ever circulates beyond Jaycee circles.

This year the Jaycees in Region 5, District 6 of the New York Jaycees have taken Cerebus as their mascot with the permission of Dave and Deni Sim. He appears on the District stationary, awards, newsletter and now on the pin. Above you can see the pin's design. the drawing does not really do it justice but the pin will not copy well due to the dark colors. The drawing does show the art by Dave Sim which is the basis of the pin.



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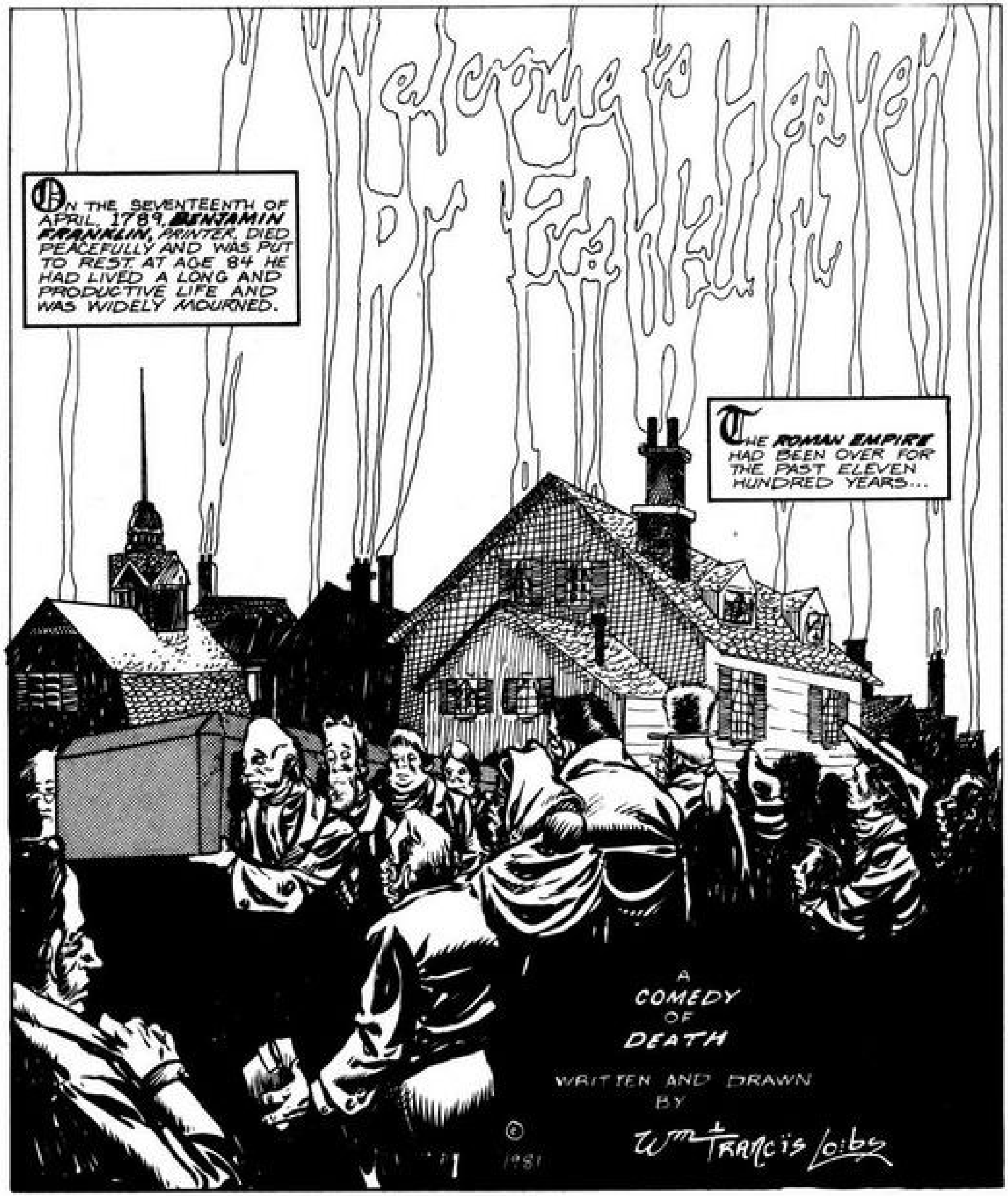
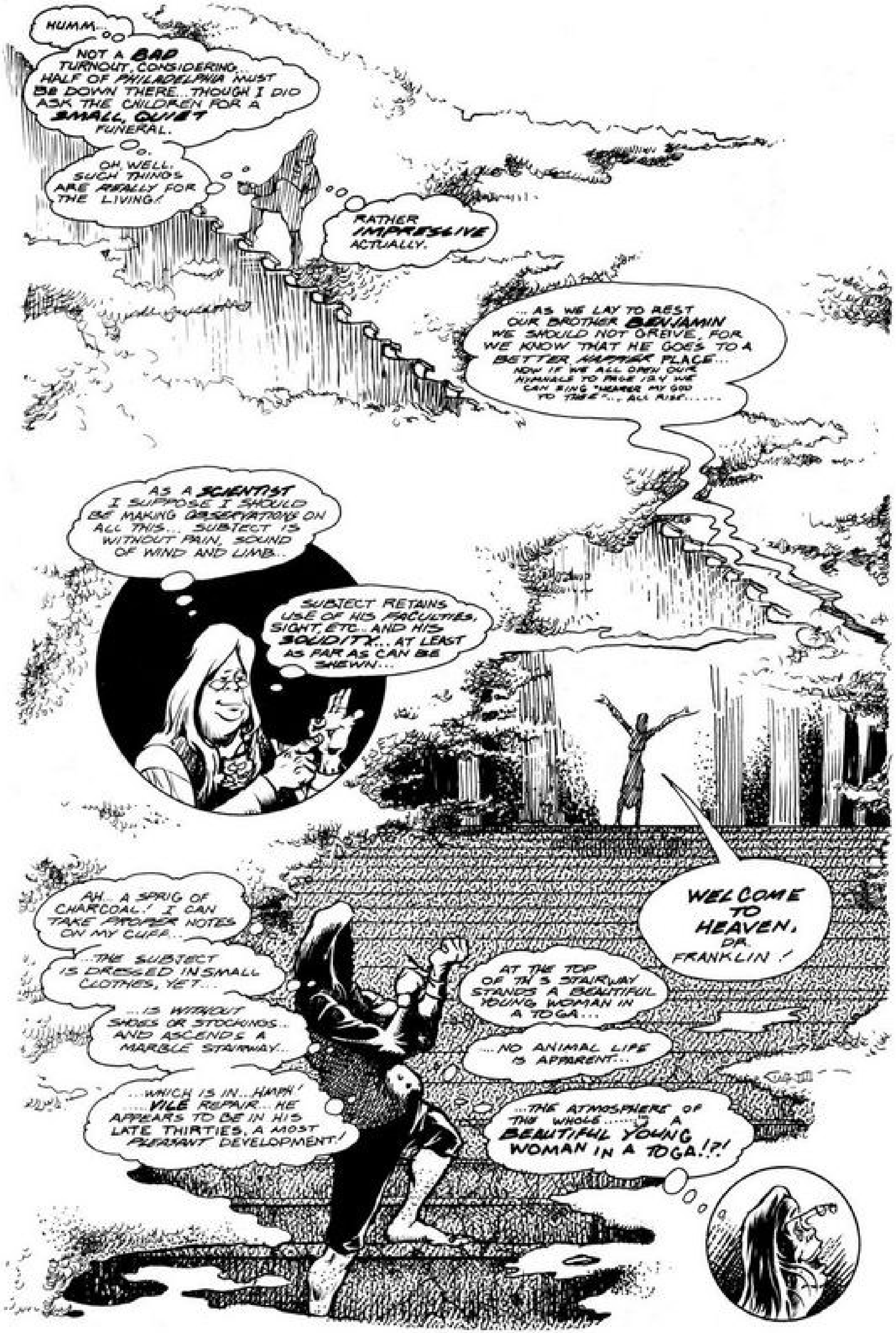
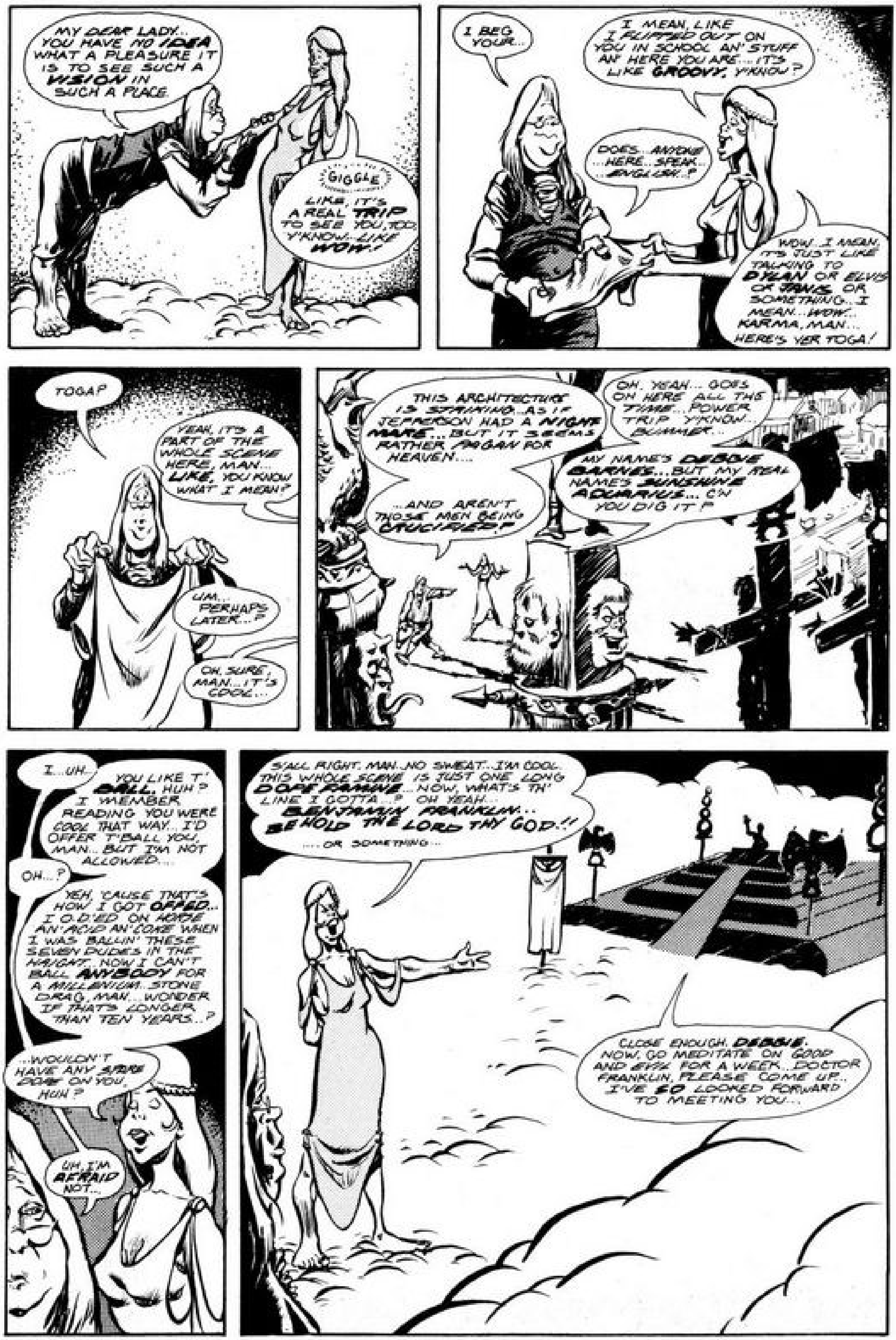
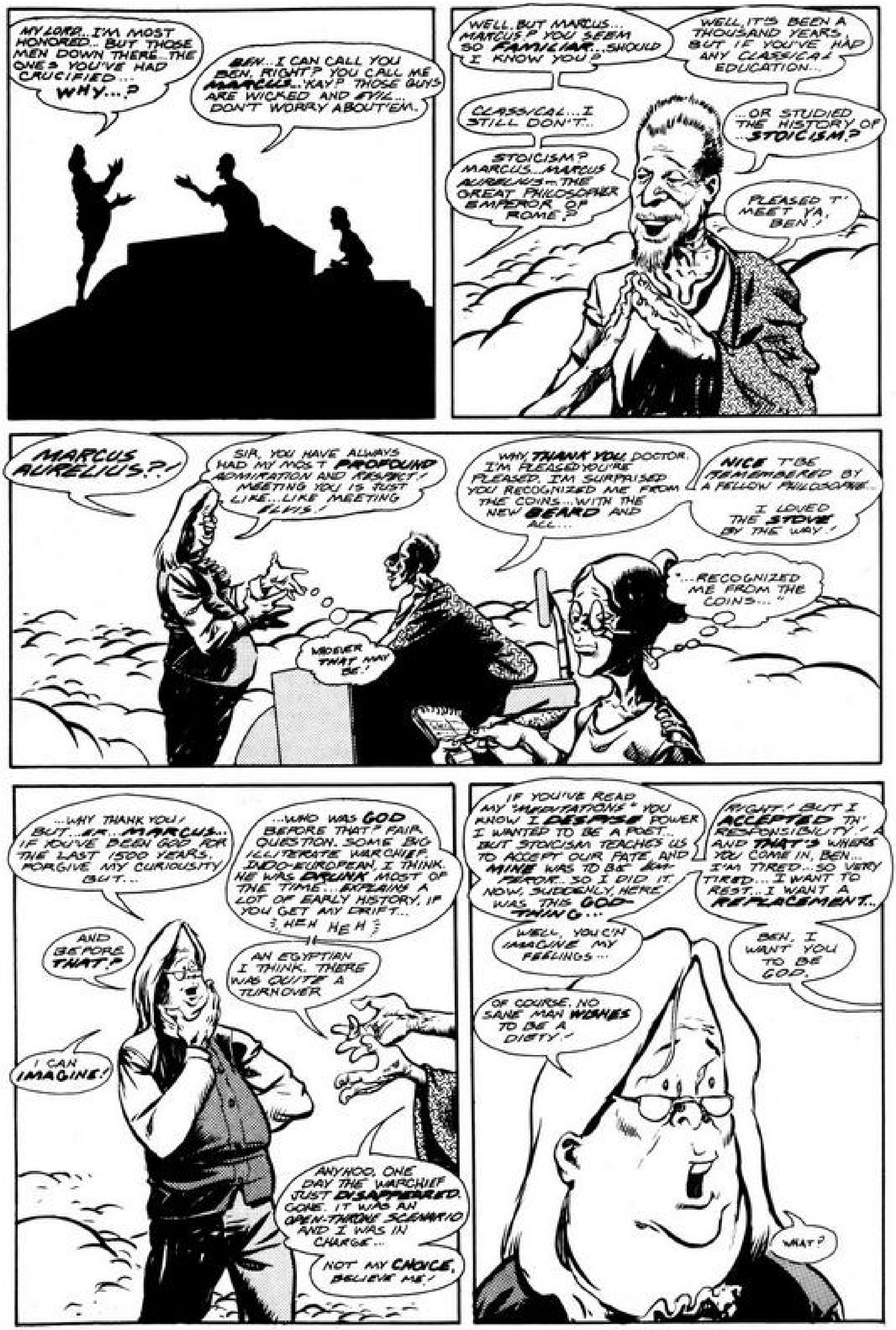
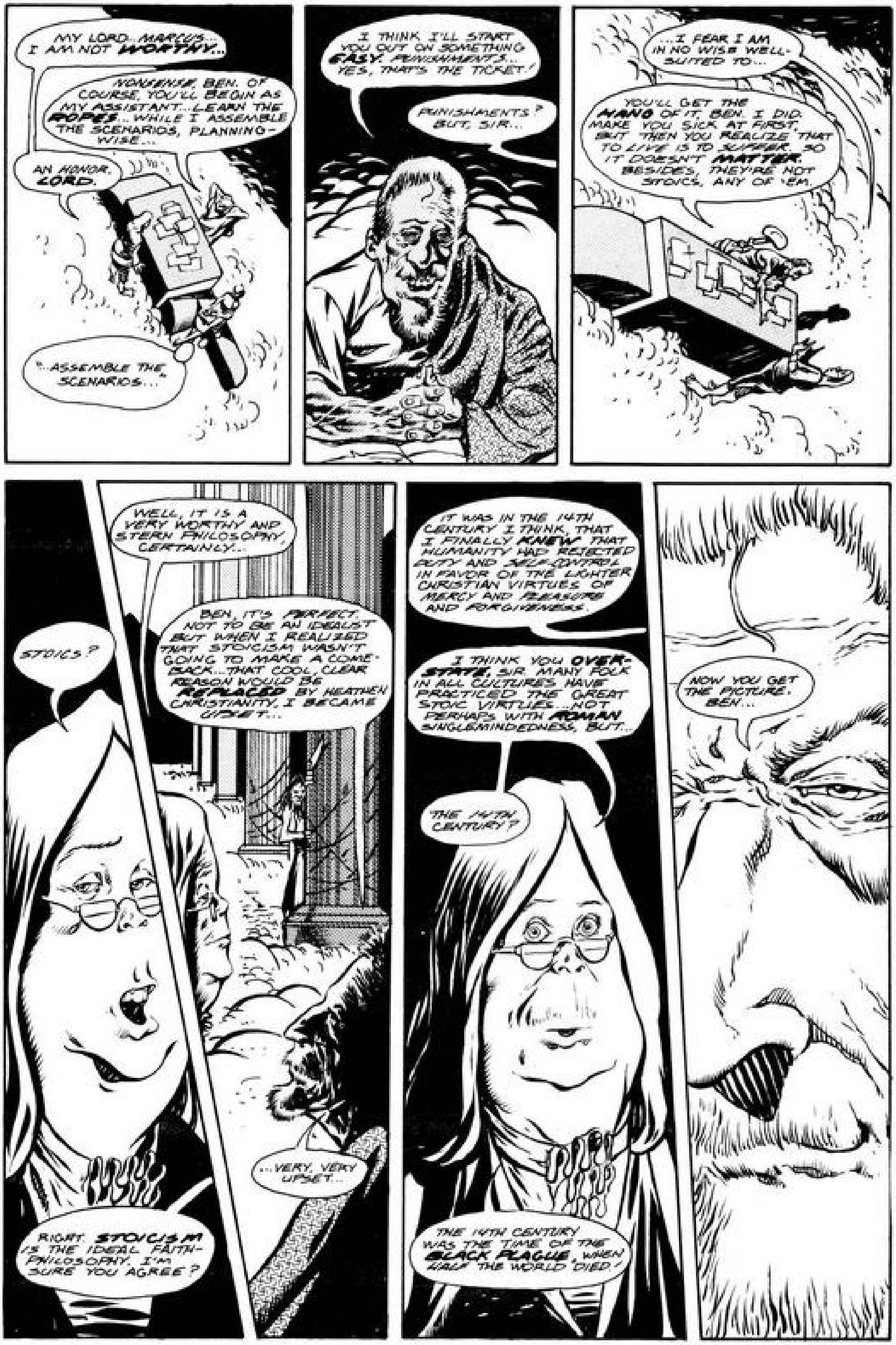
A UNIQUE STORY


Welcome to Heaven Dr. Franklin
ON THE SEVENTEENTH OF APRIL, 1789, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, PRINTER, DIED PEACEFULLY AND WAS PUT TO REST. AT AGE 84 HE HAD LIVED A LONG AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE AND WAS WIDELY MOURNED.
THE ROMAN EMPIRE HAD BEEN OVER FOR THE PAST ELEVEN HUNDRED YEARS...
A COMEDY OF DEATH
WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY
Wm Francis Loebs
© 1981


HUMM...
NOT A BAD TURNOUT, CONSIDERING... HALF OF PHILADELPHIA MUST BE DOWN THERE... THOUGH I DID ASK THE CHILDREN FOR A SMALL, QUIET FUNERAL.
OH, WELL. SUCH THINGS ARE REALLY FOR THE LIVING!
RATHER IMPRESSIVE ACTUALLY.
...AS WE LAY TO REST OUR BROTHER BENJAMIN WE SHOULD NOT GRIEVE, FOR WE KNOW THAT HE GOES TO A BETTER HAPPIER PLACE... NOW IF WE ALL OPEN OUR HYMNALS TO PAGE 124 WE CAN SING "NEARER MY GOD TO THEE"... ALL RISE......
AS A SCIENTIST I SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE MAKING OBSERVATIONS ON ALL THIS... SUBJECT IS WITHOUT PAIN, SOUND OF WIND AND LIMB...
SUBJECT RETAINS USE OF HIS FACULTIES, SIGHT, ETC... AND HIS SOLIDITY... AT LEAST AS FAR AS CAN BE SHEWN...
AH... A SPRIG OF CHARCOAL! I CAN TAKE PROPER NOTES ON MY CUFF...
...THE SUBJECT IS DRESSED IN SMALL CLOTHES, YET...
...IS WITHOUT SHOES OR STOCKINGS... AND ASCENDS A MARBLE STAIRWAY...
...WHICH IS IN... HMPH! ...VILE REPAIR... HE APPEARS TO BE IN HIS LATE THIRTIES. A MOST PLEASANT DEVELOPMENT!
WELCOME TO HEAVEN, DR. FRANKLIN!
AT THE TOP OF THIS STAIRWAY STANDS A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN IN A TOGA...
...NO ANIMAL LIFE IS APPARENT...
...THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE WHOLE...... IS A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN IN A TOGA!?!


MY DEAR LADY... YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT A PLEASURE IT IS TO SEE SUCH A VISION IN SUCH A PLACE.
GIGGLE
LIKE, IT'S A REAL TRIP TO SEE YOU, TOO, Y'KNOW... LIKE WOW!
I BEG YOUR...
I MEAN, LIKE I FLIPPED OUT ON YOU IN SCHOOL AN' STUFF AN' HERE YOU ARE... IT'S LIKE GROOVY, Y'KNOW?
DOES... ANYONE ...HERE... SPEAK... ENGLISH...?
WOW... I MEAN, IT'S JUST LIKE TALKING TO DYLAN OR ELVIS OR JANIS OR SOMETHING... I MEAN... WOW... KARMA, MAN... HERE'S YER TOGA!
TOGA?
YEAH, IT'S A PART OF THE WHOLE SCENE HERE, MAN... LIKE, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
UM... PERHAPS LATER...?
OH, SURE, MAN... IT'S COOL...
THIS ARCHITECTURE IS STRIKING... AS IF JEFFERSON HAD A NIGHT MARE... BUT IT SEEMS RATHER PAGAN FOR HEAVEN....
...AND AREN'T THOSE MEN BEING CRUCIFIED?
OH, YEAH... GOES ON HERE ALL THE TIME... POWER TRIP Y'KNOW... BUMMER...
MY NAME'S DEBBIE BARNES... BUT MY REAL NAME'S SUNSHINE AQUARIUS... CAN YOU DIG IT?
I... UH...
YOU LIKE T' BALL, HUH? I 'MEMBER READING YOU WERE COOL THAT WAY... I'D OFFER T' BALL YOU, MAN... BUT I'M NOT ALLOWED....
OH...?
YEH, 'CAUSE THAT'S HOW I GOT OFFED... I O.D.'ED ON HORSE AN' ACID AN' COKE WHEN I WAS BALLIN' THESE SEVEN DUDES IN THE HAIGHT... NOW I CAN'T BALL ANYBODY FOR A MILLENIUM... STONE DRAG, MAN... WONDER IF THAT'S LONGER THAN TEN YEARS...?
...WOULDN'T HAVE ANY SPARE DOPE ON YOU, HUH?
UH, I'M AFRAID NOT...
S'ALL RIGHT, MAN... NO SWEAT... I'M COOL. THIS WHOLE SCENE IS JUST ONE LONG DOPE FAMINE... NOW, WHAT'S TH' LINE I GOTTA...? OH YEAH... BENJAMIN FRANKLIN... BEHOLD THE LORD THY GOD!!
....OR SOMETHING...
CLOSE ENOUGH, DEBBIE. NOW, GO MEDITATE ON GOOD AND EVIL FOR A WEEK... DOCTOR FRANKLIN, PLEASE COME UP... I'VE SO LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING YOU...


MY LORD...I'M MOST HONORED... BUT THOSE MEN DOWN THERE...THE ONES YOU'VE HAD CRUCIFIED... WHY...?
BEN...I CAN CALL YOU BEN, RIGHT? YOU CALL ME MARCUS...'KAY? THOSE GUYS ARE WICKED AND EVIL... DON'T WORRY ABOUT'EM.
WELL, BUT MARCUS... MARCUS? YOU SEEM SO FAMILIAR...SHOULD I KNOW YOU?
WELL, IT'S BEEN A THOUSAND YEARS, BUT IF YOU'VE HAD ANY CLASSICAL EDUCATION...
CLASSICAL...I STILL DON'T...
...OR STUDIED THE HISTORY OF ...STOICISM?
STOICISM? MARCUS...MARCUS AURELIUS... THE GREAT PHILOSOPHER EMPEROR OF ROME?
PLEASED T' MEET YA, BEN!
MARCUS AURELIUS?!
SIR, YOU HAVE ALWAYS HAD MY MOST PROFOUND ADMIRATION AND RESPECT! MEETING YOU IS JUST LIKE...LIKE MEETING ELVIS!
WHY, THANK YOU, DOCTOR. I'M PLEASED YOU'RE PLEASED. I'M SURPRISED YOU RECOGNIZED ME FROM THE COINS...WITH THE NEW BEARD AND ALL...
NICE T'BE REMEMBERED BY A FELLOW PHILOSOPHE... I LOVED THE STOVE BY THE WAY!
WHOEVER THAT MAY BE!
"...RECOGNIZED ME FROM THE COINS..."
...WHY THANK YOU! BUT...ER...MARCUS... IF YOU'VE BEEN GOD FOR THE LAST 1500 YEARS, FORGIVE MY CURIOUSITY BUT...
...WHO WAS GOD BEFORE THAT? FAIR QUESTION. SOME BIG ILLITERATE WARCHIEF. INDO-EUROPEAN, I THINK. HE WAS DRUNK MOST OF THE TIME...EXPLAINS A LOT OF EARLY HISTORY, IF YOU GET MY DRIFT... HEH HEH
AND BEFORE THAT?
AN EGYPTIAN I THINK. THERE WAS QUITE A TURNOVER
I CAN IMAGINE!
ANYHOO, ONE DAY THE WARCHIEF JUST DISAPPEARED. GONE. IT WAS AN OPEN-THRONE SCENARIO AND I WAS IN CHARGE...
NOT MY CHOICE, BELIEVE ME!
IF YOU'VE READ MY "MEDITATIONS" YOU KNOW I DESPISE POWER I WANTED TO BE A POET... BUT STOICISM TEACHES US TO ACCEPT OUR FATE AND MINE WAS TO BE EMPEROR...SO I DID IT. NOW, SUDDENLY, HERE WAS THIS GOD-THING...
RIGHT! BUT I ACCEPTED TH' RESPONSIBILITY! AND THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN, BEN... I'M TIRED...SO VERY TIRED...I WANT TO REST...I WANT A REPLACEMENT...
WELL, YOU C'N IMAGINE MY FEELINGS...
BEN, I WANT YOU TO BE GOD.
OF COURSE, NO SANE MAN WISHES TO BE A DIETY!
WHAT?


MY LORD...MARCUS... I AM NOT WORTHY...
NONSENSE, BEN. OF COURSE, YOU'LL BEGIN AS MY ASSISTANT...LEARN THE ROPES...WHILE I ASSEMBLE THE SCENARIOS, PLANNING-WISE...
AN HONOR, LORD.
"...ASSEMBLE THE SCENARIOS..."
I THINK I'LL START YOU OUT ON SOMETHING EASY. PUNISHMENTS... YES, THAT'S THE TICKET!
PUNISHMENTS? BUT, SIR...
...I FEAR I AM IN NO WISE WELL-SUITED TO...
YOU'LL GET THE HANG OF IT, BEN. I DID. MAKE YOU SICK AT FIRST, BUT THEN YOU REALIZE THAT TO LIVE IS TO SUFFER. SO IT DOESN'T MATTER. BESIDES, THEY'RE NOT STOICS, ANY OF 'EM.
STOICS?
RIGHT. STOICISM IS THE IDEAL FAITH-PHILOSOPHY, I'M SURE YOU AGREE?
WELL, IT IS A VERY WORTHY AND STERN PHILOSOPHY, CERTAINLY...
BEN, IT'S PERFECT. NOT TO BE AN IDEALIST BUT WHEN I REALIZED THAT STOICISM WASN'T GOING TO MAKE A COME-BACK...THAT COOL, CLEAR REASON WOULD BE REPLACED BY HEATHEN CHRISTIANITY, I BECAME UPSET...
...VERY, VERY UPSET...
IT WAS IN THE 14TH CENTURY I THINK, THAT I FINALLY KNEW THAT HUMANITY HAD REJECTED DUTY AND SELF-CONTROL IN FAVOR OF THE LIGHTER CHRISTIAN VIRTUES OF MERCY AND PLEASURE AND FORGIVENESS.
I THINK YOU OVERSTATE, SIR. MANY FOLK IN ALL CULTURES HAVE PRACTICED THE GREAT STOIC VIRTUES...NOT PERHAPS WITH ROMAN SINGLEMINDEDNESS, BUT...
THE 14TH CENTURY?
THE 14TH CENTURY WAS THE TIME OF THE BLACK PLAGUE, WHEN HALF THE WORLD DIED!
NOW YOU GET THE PICTURE, BEN...

to be continued:

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni

So, whatever goes around comes around, and now I'm more familiar with Cerebus. The two Swords you sent, plus my own searching out of a run from No. 17 on have rectified my ignorance, and of course, the folks who told me for months that you did good work were right all along. And, of course, mail that comes back "service suspended" from Canada was a victim of the mail strike, but if you're not already reading Canadian comics, how're you supposed to know that they explained that already?

Anyway, I do like Cerebus very much — so much, in fact, that I find myself in the position (very strange for one who grew up and worked in a time when Marvel and DC were comics) of really liking only three books out of the hundreds on the market, and having two of those three be Independents. The three? CEREBUS, ELFQUEST, and DAREDEVIL — all, I note, by writer/artists, the age of the Comics Writer having passed into history for the nonce. And if Deni hadn't put me on the mailing list one day, I would probably never have looked at the first two of those three, so I owe you two votes of gratitude (and the Pinis one each).

Now clearly, I like what you're doing on the surface, month by month, but I was most impressed by the overview Dave has of his work as demonstrated in the comments in the Swords. Anybody can take somebody else's ideas, percolate them through his own brain, and come up with a take-off; some people build whole careers on adaptations. But to use that initial idea as a launching pad for a personal vision is rare. I'm frank to tell you that I didn't see all those minute transitions you talked about between each succeeding issue, but what matters is that you did. And since you did, you don't need me to tell you that that's what separates the men from the boys.

I was turning down invitations to cons for a good year before The Point Man came out, and Kitchener's a little off my regular rounds, so we've never met; but now that the book's off and running, I hope we all end up in the same low dive some night. If you come this way, be sure to give me a call.

Steve Englehart
Oakland, California

We met in 1973, Steve, at Cosmicon in Toronto. I cornered you in one of the artrooms and asked you to comment on T. Casey Brennan's quote: "If you are going to show violence in a comic book, you should show the results of that violence." Your comments, as well as those of other Comic Writers, appeared in Now and Then Times No. 2, a fanzine I edited for Harry Kremer, you probably forgot because I was a lot shorter then and I didn't wash my hair quite as often.

Dear Dave and Deni

Aha! Another project for an upcoming backup feature in a future SWORDS OF CEREBUS — how Captain Cockroach got from guarding the houseplants from the drapes in Beduin nine issues ago to being wounded as the Moon-Roach in Astoria's bedroom in Iest? The two "origins" offered schizophrenically by the Moon Roach himself are, at best, suspect. The gardener goodie sounds influenced by Cerebus. When appearing to the Cockroach as the spirit of his dead father, the earth pig went into a spiel about Condominiums (with gardeners) of God in the afterlife to get the Cootie's eight feet of gold. The death of the merchant's father 30 years previous (tell me if you've heard this) was the trauma which turned the unnamed merchant into the Cockroach. Kevitch (with his punchum inna face philosophy) must be an extension of the original Cockroach personality. Perhaps Artemus Strong is an extention of the original merchant persona re-emerging. At any rate, the second origin offered subvocally on the rooftops sounds very close to the one Cerebus offered the Cockroach after discovering the Crazed Caped Cootie had moved his golden horde to his prison cell in No. 12 (which was the best the short grey wonder could come up with on the spur of the moment). Well, I'm sure more revelations will follow.

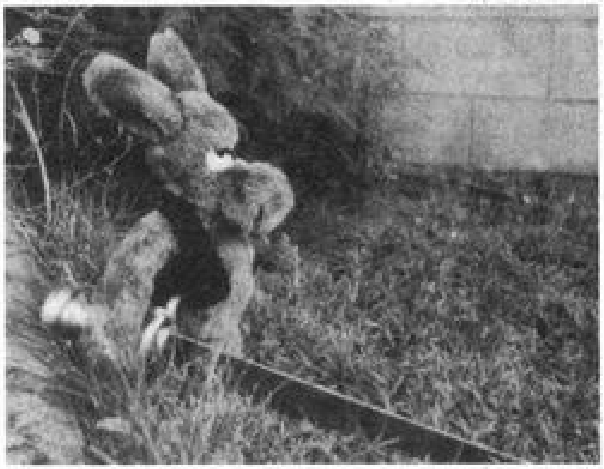
And, tangentially, I must compliment Elf on her mythical, mystical nature. Not only does she get to avoid the aroma of an avenging aardvark after a hard rain but her loud laughter at his towel-dried forelock causes Cerebus's necklace (which she had been wearing for the four previous pages) to disappear!

About the enclosures. I took some slides of my Official Cerebus Toy (he's a doll!) outside my apartment with my sword in hand. Except for the anterier line (implying a navel which we know the earth-pig lacks) they look pretty authentic. In fact, when I showed the slides to some friends (on a sheet with ones taken at a Halloween superheroes gathering) they asked who was the guy in the aardvark suit! (Echoes of Elrod!) I hope that you like them. I sent a set to Fred and I'll send some prints to Sheila Watson for a job well done.

Dick Glass
1522 Sixth Street No. 2
Santa Monica, Calif. 90401

*So far, eagle-eyed Dick Glass is the only one to notice the disappearing necklace (or at least the only one to write about it) Can Dave Sim come up with a definative explanation that will dovetail neatly with the present continuity? Or at least hint that the disappearing necklace is really the first indication of a sub-plot that won't emerge fully until issue 162? No.
Wish we had a no-prize for you, Dick.*

Stuffed toys are available from Sheila Watson, Apt. 6-549 Victoria St. S., Kitchener, Ontario, N2M 3A8 Canada for $15.00. (certified cheque or money order only please).



His brow furrowed, Cerebus ponders how he is going to get from the suburbs back to the Regency downtown in time for next issue's "Two Days Before". Dick Glass' sword looks on, reflectively.

People,

Cerebus No. 30 and No. 31 were a nice change of pace from what I normally read. I'm not saying they were better or worse than "mainstream" comics, because I don't consider myself a comics "snob", like many other letter writers. In fact, let me make a statement here to everyone within "earshot." Let's all stop this stupid trend to say that comics put out by Marvel, DC, or the other "biggies" are all garbage, simply because they are put out by a major publisher.

I find that enjoyment comes in all forms. Be it Cerebus, Fantastic Four, X-Men, The Spirit, or what have you, I'm out to

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

enjoy a story. And I don't let comic "prejudices" get in the way. And I hope that the more sensible, true comic fans feel the same way.

But, back to Cerebus.

The advent of Moon Roach was downright clever. I'm sure that Doug and Bill enjoyed it.

It was a deft parody, and soooo on target. I'll be interested in seeing next issues happenings and what they hold for our fave aardvark hero.

Artwise, both issues were well done, though a bit loose on control (facially anyway).

All in all, two very fun issues with the promise of many more to come.

John A. Wilcox
40 Hales Court
Westport, CT 06880

Deni and I get free copies of all the Marvel Comics (thanks to all the Marvel people, by the way). You should watch us argue over who gets to read the X-Men first.

Dear Dave

I've got a better idea — why don't you start drawing Mark Hahn of Socorro, New Mexico, with skinny arms and a long, droopy nose? Let him see how it feels after a long day in the saddle (noselash is a common occupational disease among aardvarkian horsemen, er 'varks, er, horsepersons). The new muscular Cerebus is a much better comedic persona than his earlier incarnations — all that obvious strength, coupled with Cerebus' flawed pragmatism and his own competence in his limited field, make his perpetual frustrations even more amusing. An aardvarkian Don Knotts chasing the Cootie just wouldn't be as funny.

(There's also the issue of letting the artist create his work the way he sees fit, but let's not open that can of worms. It's taken some of our greatest American corporations years to drum that silly notion out of the local talent).

By the way, now that we've sent some crack teams of readers up to Kitchener to spread crash padding around the base of every tall building (both of them, including the four-story job) — where's Jaka?

P.S. Watch it with the duck, buddy.

P.P.S. — a sudden nasty thought — re: Jaka, spurned, heartbroken and lovelorn, abused by life and circumstance, weary of battle with the cruel callous world — you wouldn't, Dave, would you? Not the *Cirinists?!*

Richard S. McEnroe
265 Westervelt Ave.
Staten Island, N.Y. 10301

A Cirinist, eh? I hadn't though of that. A Cirinist. "Spurned by the earth-pig she loves ...." A Cirinist. Hmmm. I hadn't thought of that.

Dave or Deni

I'm getting mad, I'm getting damned mad. I don't know which one of you is responsible for it, but I'm mad, seriously upset, angry, distressed and MAD! I let it get by with Swords of Cerebus No. 1, let it get by with Swords of Cerebus No. 2, but I can't stand it any longer. Do you have any idea what you are doing to your oldest and staunchest fans, the ones that were with you since Cerebus No. 1. You're hurting us badly. you may even be succeeding in ripping some of us off, those that can afford it. I'm referring to the new story you add to each issue of Swords of Cerebus. I'm not about to pay $4.00 for an eight page story, and some introductions, and some stories I already own. The first two issues I could let slip by because, frankly, the stories weren't all that essential. But now! you're going to do a story explaining what happened between issues No. 20 and No. 22, for 50¢ a page. I'm the one that originally asked for that explanation and now I won't even get to own the answer. Why are you doing this? What have I ever done to you?

Dennis Summers
242 Cedar St. Apt. 4
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

I'm getting damned mad too. Don't you think it would be easy to just reprint the stories and put two cover reproductions on the front and two on the back? Then I would get blamed for just putting out the book to make money. Why not write some introductions, a new story, or at least do a new cover. I reiterate from last issue. If there's not enough in Swords to make it worth buying, don't buy it.

Dear Dave and Deni

This letter should have come earlier. I've been meaning to write since issue 19, but I've been too lazy, I guess.

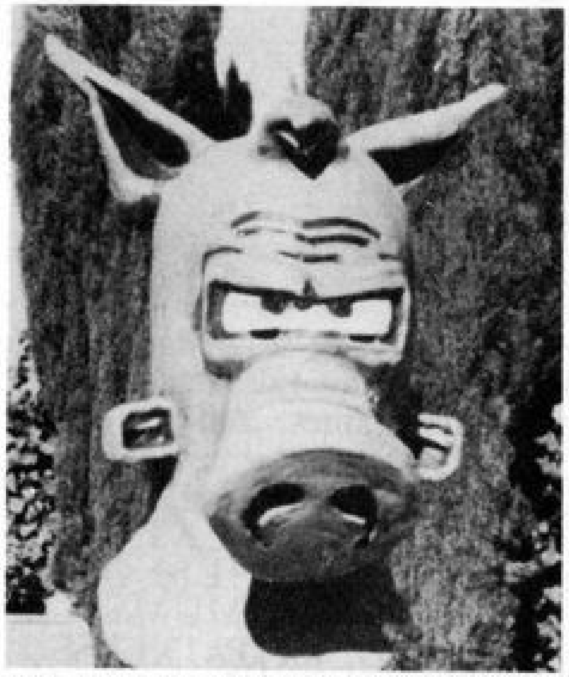
Well, anyways, Cerebus is great. He's the best thing, I think, since Robert Crumbs' Fritz the Cat (which says a lot for me).

Since I was inspired by the masks by David Sellnow and Jeff Christian i decided to make my own. A picture is enclosed. No. to tell you the truth, while I was out in my back-yard one peaceful day, all of a sudden, a mad aardvark swinging a sword came after me. Fortunately, I had my camera to take some pictures before I was knocked out cold.

Concerning Mark Hahn's letter in issue No. 31, I like how Cerebus is now. He looks a lot better than he did in issue 6. For an example, look at number 6, page 3, do you see Cerebus' legs? Do those look like legs that can walk?

Randy Saba
3000 Dona Emilia Dr.
Studio City, CA. 91604

My sentiments exactly, Randy.



The Mad Aardvark of Studio City, photographed by Randy Saba just before he lost consciousness.

Dave and Deni

So I says to myself, "Self, it's about time that you let those folks know of your appreciation for dropping an Earth-pig Born, wet fur and all, into your lap." So Self says, "Yeah, but everybody and their uncle are doing that." So I says, "Ah, what the hell, it's too good of a series to worry about appearing unoriginal. You have to support quality."

I admit my first reaction to seeing your book, a couple of years past, was, "An aardvark? With a sword? Gimme a break." But eventually I decided to sidestep my bias against animal characters in this case because of the continual rumors about the series increasing quality. Imagine mah sooprize. Within a week I had most of the back issues in my covetous hands. Hey, if I find myself to be wrong on something, I don't waste time trying to rationalize my previous view, I just jump on the goddam bandwagon. So I can be as opportunistic as the next slob. So sue me.

From your reader's letters, it seems as if they're all continuity junkies. A little continuity never hurts, but don't be induced into the Marvel-DC version of "intellectualism" that tries to explain all the inconsistancies and ties up every possible and conveivable loose end in the mythos. For myself, the joy of your series isn't so much the depth and interweavings of your plots (though my appreciation for it is there), it is the tapestry of the characterizations, with its superb and nimble-witted dialogue and the true *comic* capturing of facial expressions that immediately reveal the character's basic nature and present mood. Continuity is only the mug, it is the characters and your sense of humor that is the elixir.

The badinage and the satire are what make the book click. "Chasing Cootie" has been one of the best efforts yet. I start to laugh when I think about the story, just like I do with the "Cerebus Held Hostage" sequence and it's damn card game. There are many lines from "Chasing Cootie" that ring with hilarity. My favorites are those that say a heap about masculinity, like "You don't often find a man his size with a conscience about social issues," and "You rich broads sure got soft hands." You don't often find a comic that makes you guffaw and ponder simultaneously.

One can get the psuedo "realism" fix of continuity on any soap opera and in any mainstream comic. Where, I say where can you get "unorthodox economic revenge" and "It felt, Artemis said, like I was having an origin."? Where can you get this divine drollery, this wide-awake wit, this esprit de chuckles?

Class, read my lips.

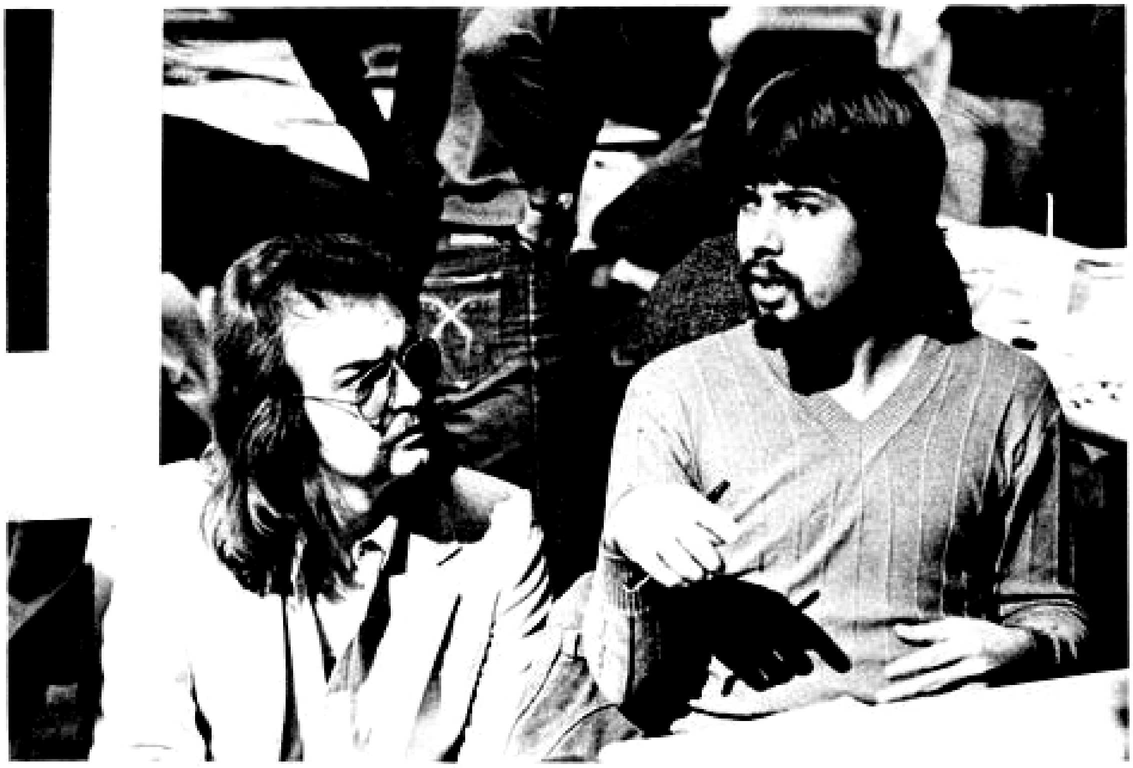
P.S. Do you take requests? I'd like to see some unorthodox aesthetic revenge on "Let them eat ketchup" Reagan and Nuclear Warning Shot Al Haig, and some down-home tomfoolery with one of your kingdoms being run by Larry, Moe and Curly. "Say Toots, whose in charge here?"

David Stallman
Box 544
Rocklin, CA 95677

"Gentlemen: read your constitution. It says right there that if "Let them eat ketchup" springs a leak in his left side owing to some aggressive action by manipulated malcontents, if you will, of the Sepran Block Nations, power, control, influence and, if you will, arrogance all shift to the Secretary of State — at least until the Vice-President, the Speaker of the House and the Secretary of Defense can slip out of their astutely knotted restraints." Sorry, I don't know how to draw a West Point haircut.

FANTACON '81

First in a series of five photo's by William C. Johnson of Dave, Deni, and friends at FANTACON in Albany, N.Y., September 18-19, 1981.



Dave Sim, his drawing hand paralized by an offer of a cover-painting for Swords of Cerebus Volume 4, tries to string enough words together to make a full sentance. Barry Smith looks on in puzzlement as he tries to fathom the meaning of, "Cov...Cover...p...painting...? Dah! Daah! Daah!"

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

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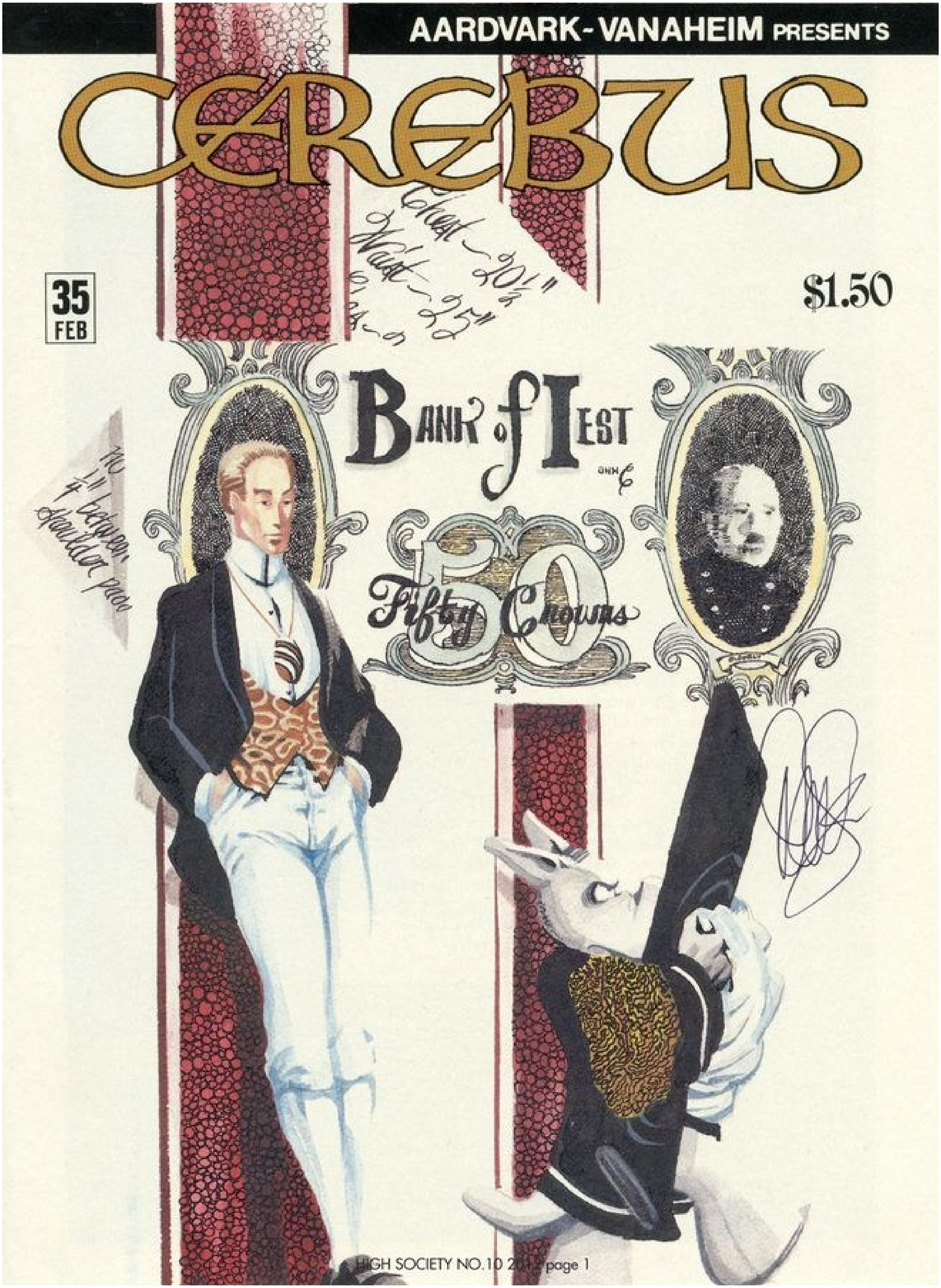
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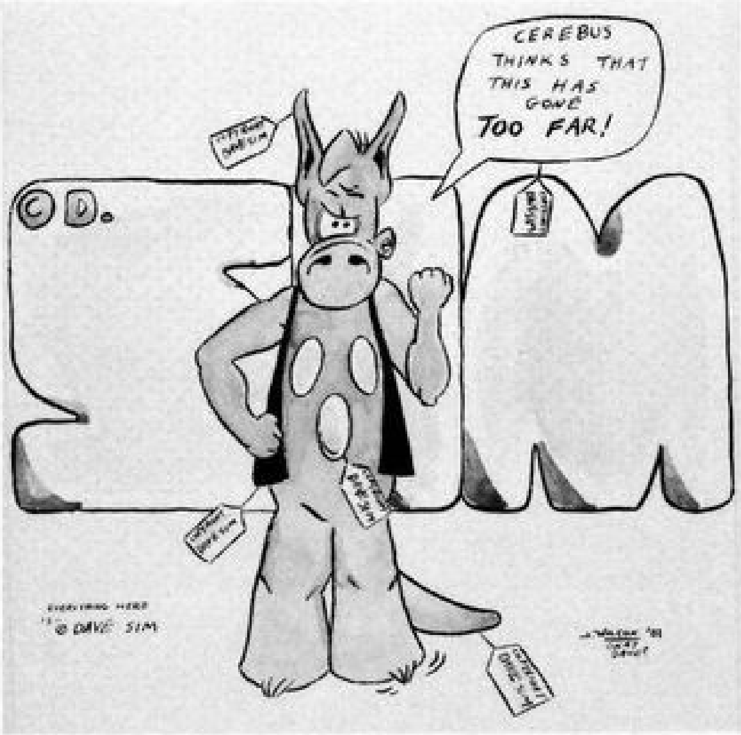
A Note from the Publisher


CEREBUS THINKS THAT THIS HAS GONE TOO FAR!
© D.
EVERYTHING HERE IS © DAVE SIM

This is just a short note. Fred Patten has reminded me that fan club memberships are due to be renewed. If you are sending him a personal cheque — please remember to make it out to Fred Patten. He can't do anything with cheques made out to The Cerebus Fan Club, or whatever, so make sure that you have it right.

Poor Fred — he works so hard on all the Fan Club stuff!! Hey Fred! Keep up the good work! Oh yes — the above illustration was sent to us by John A. Wilcox of Westport, Connecticut, in answer to some comments made in earlier issues. I think that everyone has gotten the idea, John.

I'm sorry that this particular editorial is so short, but I do promise to try harder next issue. See you then!!

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 35 FEBRUARY, 1982

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Deni Sim

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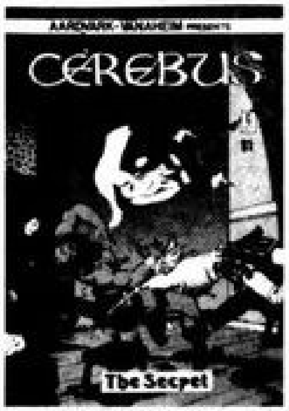

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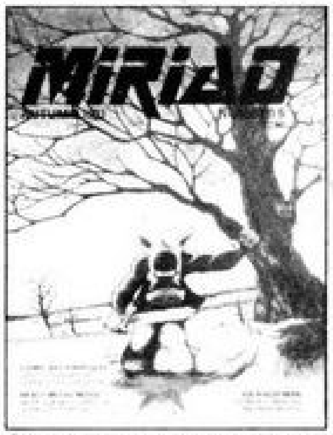

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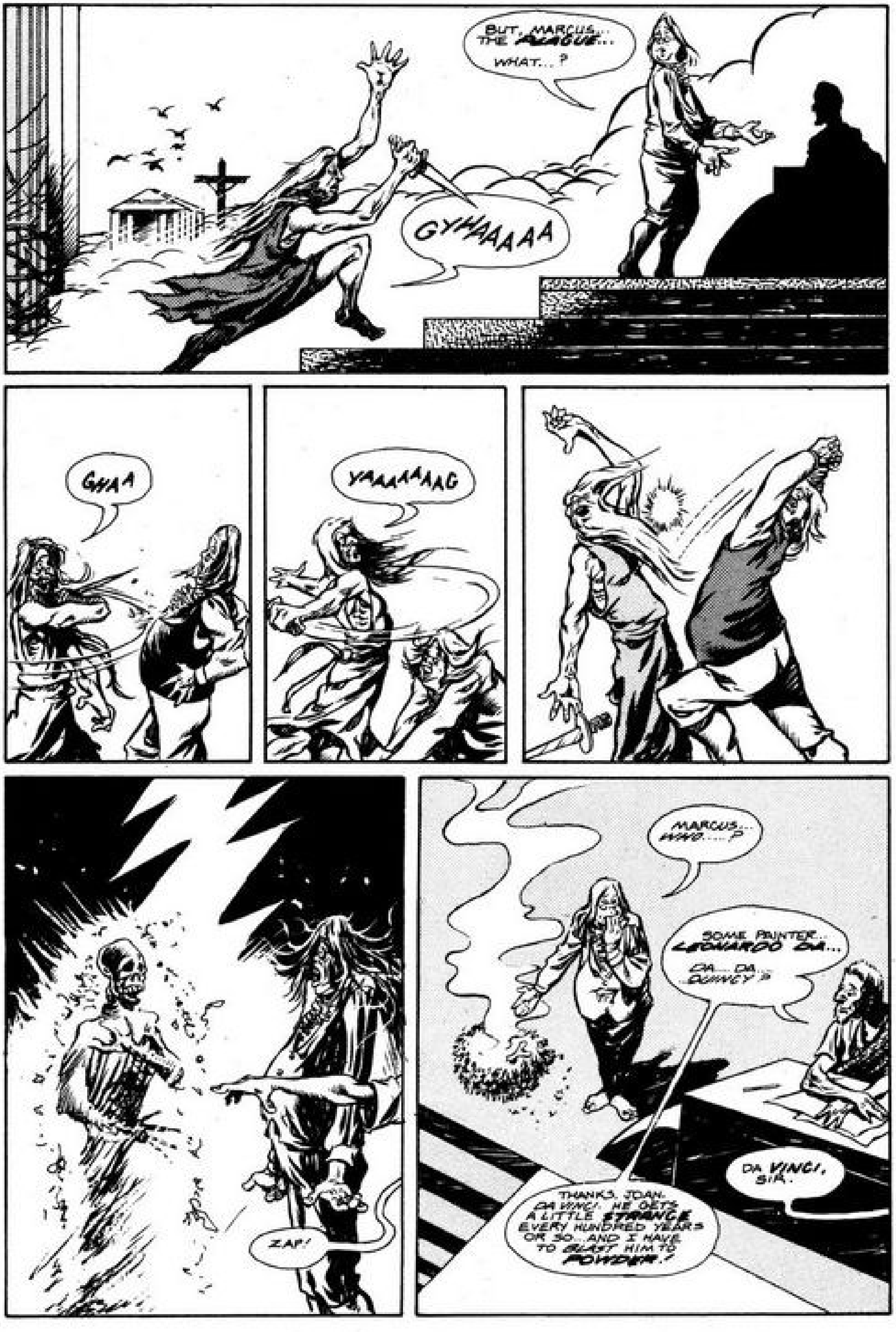
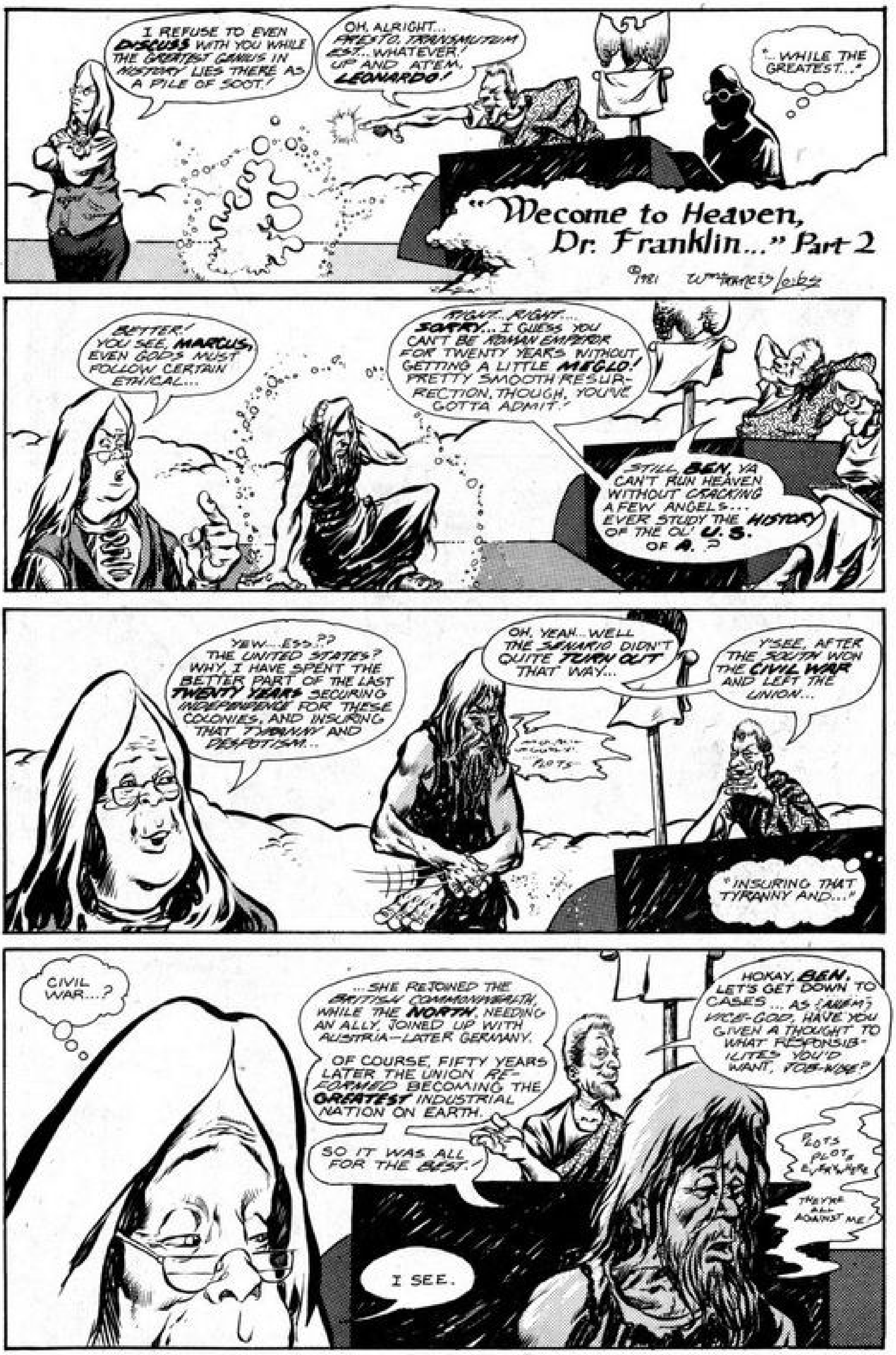
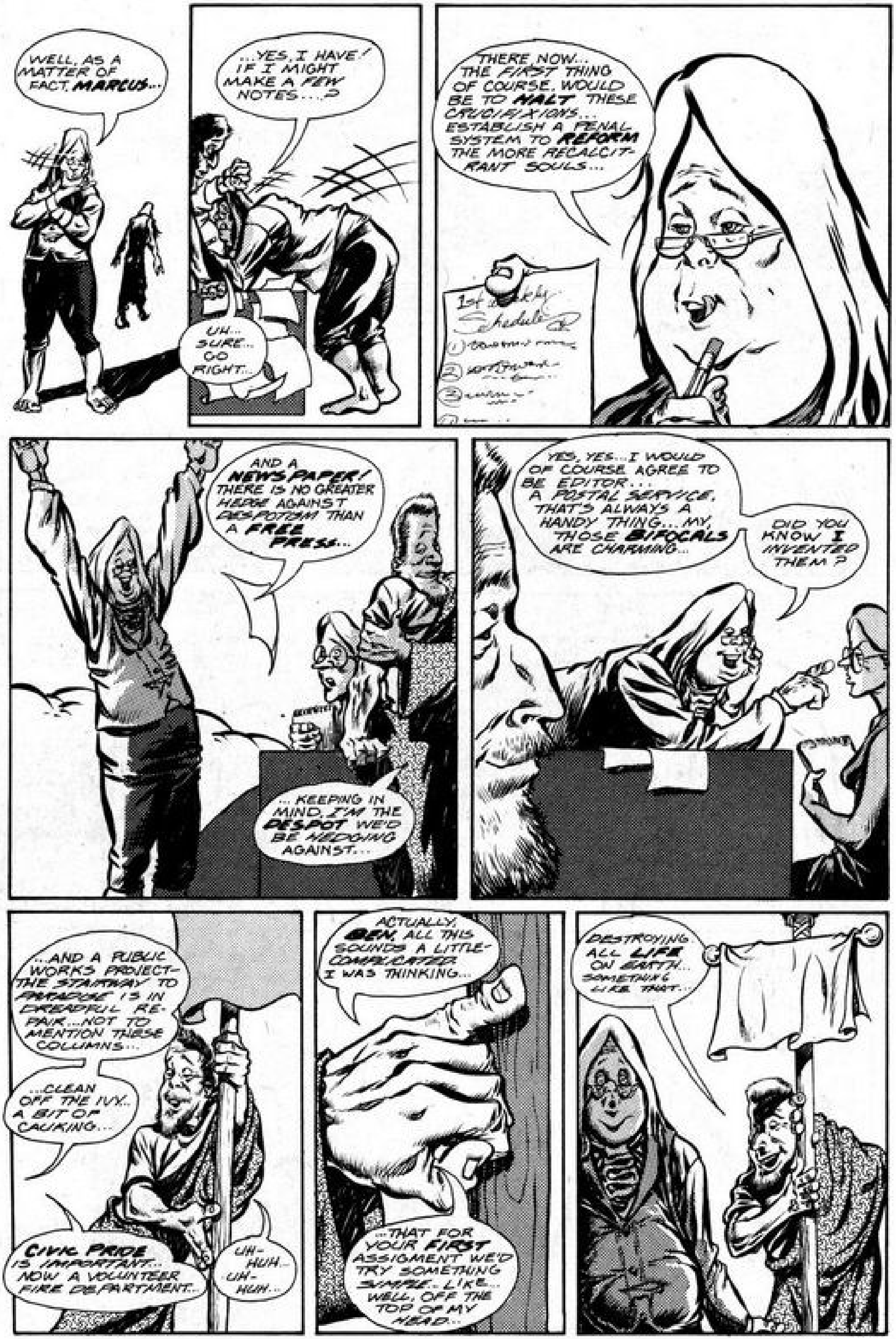
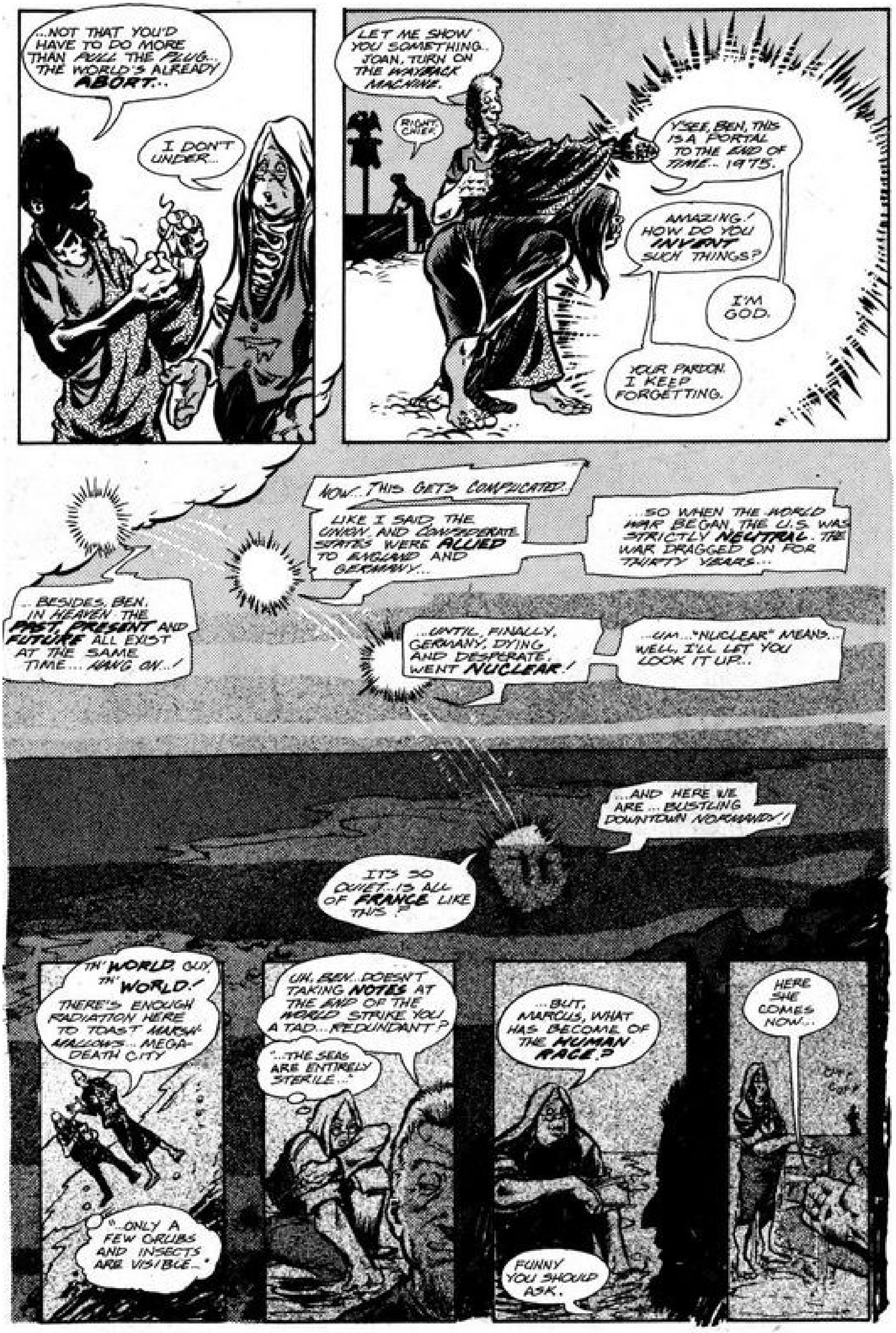
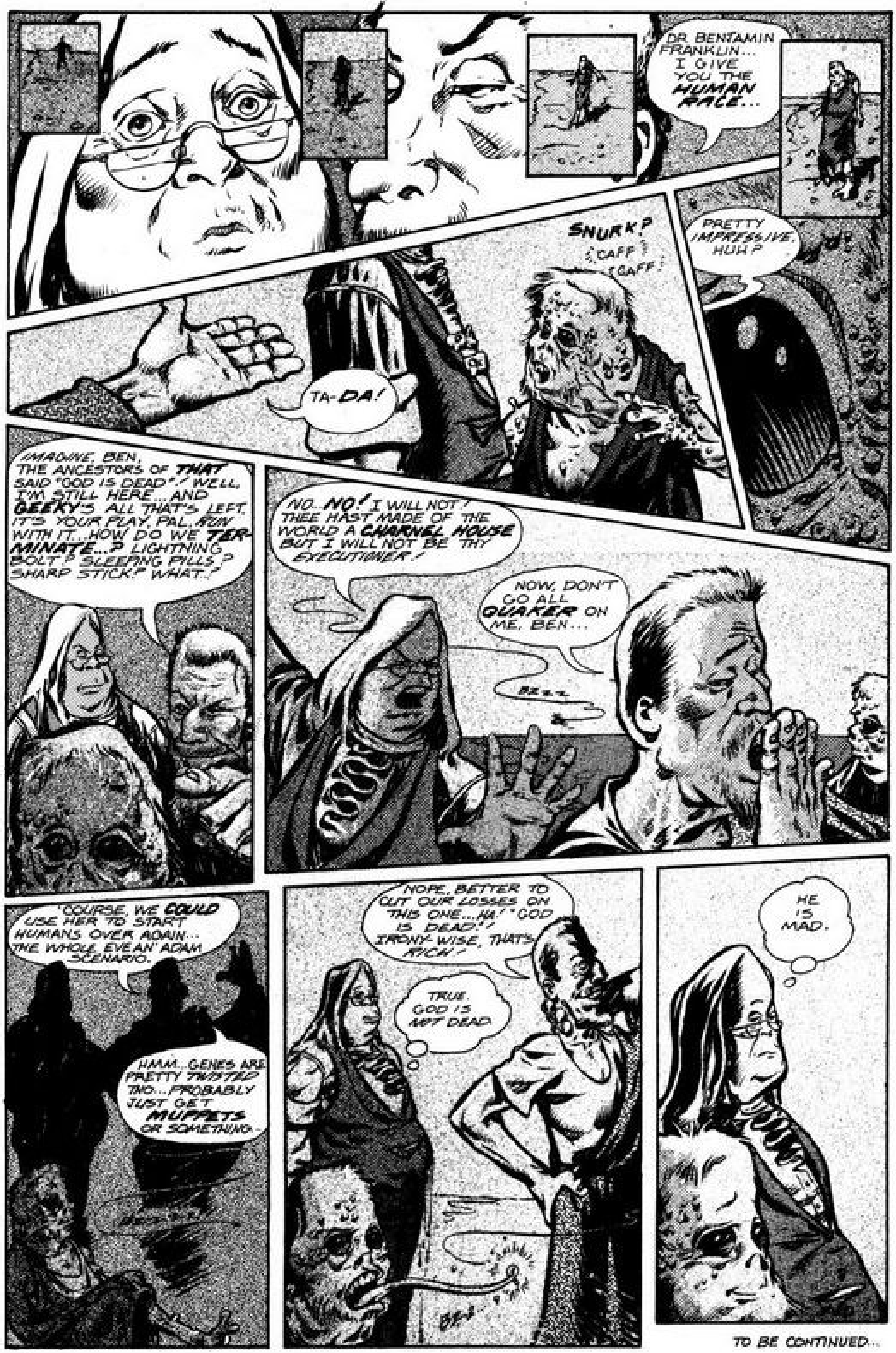

BUT, MARCUS... THE PLAGUE... WHAT...?
GYHAAAAAA
GHAA
YAAAAAAAG
ZAP!
MARCUS... WHO....?
SOME PAINTER... LEONARDO DA... DA... DA... DOWNEY?
DA VINCI, SIR.
THANKS, JOAN. DA VINCI! HE GETS A LITTLE STRANGE EVERY HUNDRED YEARS OR SO... AND I HAVE TO BLAST HIM TO POWDER!


I REFUSE TO EVEN DISCUSS WITH YOU WHILE THE GREATEST GENIUS IN HISTORY LIES THERE AS A PILE OF SOOT!
OH, ALRIGHT... PRESTO, TRANSMUTEUM EST... WHATEVER! UP AND AT'EM, LEONARDO!
"...WHILE THE GREATEST..."
"Wecome to Heaven, Dr. Franklin..." Part 2
©1981 Wm Francis Loebs
BETTER! YOU SEE, MARCUS, EVEN GODS MUST FOLLOW CERTAIN ETHICAL...
RIGHT... RIGHT... SORRY... I GUESS YOU CAN'T BE ROMAN EMPEROR FOR TWENTY YEARS WITHOUT GETTING A LITTLE MEGLO! PRETTY SMOOTH RESURRECTION, THOUGH, YOU'VE GOTTA ADMIT!
STILL, BEN, YA CAN'T RUN HEAVEN WITHOUT CRACKING A FEW ANGELS... EVER STUDY THE HISTORY OF THE OL' U.S. OF A.?
YEW... ESS...?? THE UNITED STATES? WHY, I HAVE SPENT THE BETTER PART OF THE LAST TWENTY YEARS SECURING INDEPENDENCE FOR THESE COLONIES, AND INSURING THAT TYRANNY AND DESPOTISM...
PLOTS
OH, YEAH... WELL THE SENARIO DIDN'T QUITE TURN OUT THAT WAY...
Y'SEE, AFTER THE SOUTH WON THE CIVIL WAR AND LEFT THE UNION...
"INSURING THAT TYRANNY AND..."
CIVIL WAR...?
...SHE REJOINED THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH, WHILE THE NORTH, NEEDING AN ALLY, JOINED UP WITH AUSTRIA—LATER GERMANY.
OF COURSE, FIFTY YEARS LATER THE UNION RE-FORMED BECOMING THE GREATEST INDUSTRIAL NATION ON EARTH.
SO IT WAS ALL FOR THE BEST!
HOKAY, BEN, LET'S GET DOWN TO CASES ... AS (AHEM) VICE-GOD, HAVE YOU GIVEN A THOUGHT TO WHAT RESPONSIBILITES YOU'D WANT, JOB-WISE?
PLOTS PLOTS EVERYWHERE
THEY'RE ALL AGAINST ME!
I SEE.


WELL, AS A MATTER OF FACT, **MARCUS**...
...YES, I HAVE! IF I MIGHT MAKE A *FEW* NOTES....?
UH... SURE... GO RIGHT...
THERE NOW... THE *FIRST* THING OF COURSE, WOULD BE TO **HALT** THESE *CRUCIFIXIONS*... ESTABLISH A *PENAL* SYSTEM TO **REFORM** THE MORE *RECALCIT-RANT* SOULS...
1st weekly Schedule
AND A **NEWSPAPER!** THERE IS NO GREATER *HEDGE* AGAINST *DESPOTISM* THAN A **FREE PRESS**...
... KEEPING IN MIND, *I'M* THE **DESPOT** WE'D BE *HEDGING* AGAINST...
YES, YES... I WOULD OF COURSE AGREE TO BE EDITOR... A *POSTAL SERVICE*, THAT'S ALWAYS A HANDY THING... MY, THOSE **BIFOCALS** ARE *CHARMING*...
DID YOU KNOW **I** *INVENTED* THEM?
...AND A PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT- THE *STAIRWAY* TO *PARADISE* IS IN *DREADFUL* RE-PAIR...NOT TO MENTION THESE COLUMNS...
...CLEAN OFF THE IVY.. A *BIT* OF CAULKING...
CIVIC PRIDE IS *IMPORTANT*... NOW A VOLUNTEER *FIRE DEPARTMENT*...
UH-HUH... UH-HUH...
ACTUALLY, **BEN**, ALL THIS SOUNDS A LITTLE- *COMPLICATED*. I WAS THINKING...
...THAT FOR YOUR **FIRST** ASSIGMENT WE'D TRY SOMETHING *SIMPLE*.. LIKE... WELL, OFF THE TOP OF MY *HEAD*...
DESTROYING ALL **LIFE** ON *EARTH*... SOMETHING LIKE THAT...


...NOT THAT YOU'D HAVE TO DO MORE THAN PULL THE PLUG... THE WORLD'S ALREADY ABORT...
I DON'T UNDER...
LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING.. JOAN, TURN ON THE WAYBACK MACHINE.
RIGHT, CHIEF.
Y'SEE, BEN, THIS IS A PORTAL TO THE END OF TIME... 1975.
AMAZING! HOW DO YOU INVENT SUCH THINGS?
I'M GOD.
YOUR PARDON. I KEEP FORGETTING.
NOW... THIS GETS COMPLICATED.
LIKE I SAID THE UNION AND CONFEDERATE STATES WERE ALLIED TO ENGLAND AND GERMANY...
...SO WHEN THE WORLD WAR BEGAN, THE U.S. WAS STRICTLY NEUTRAL. THE WAR DRAGGED ON FOR THIRTY YEARS...
...BESIDES, BEN, IN HEAVEN THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE ALL EXIST AT THE SAME TIME... HANG ON...!
...UNTIL, FINALLY, GERMANY, DYING AND DESPERATE, WENT NUCLEAR!
...UM... "NUCLEAR" MEANS... WELL, I'LL LET YOU LOOK IT UP...
...AND HERE WE ARE... BUSTLING DOWNTOWN NORMANDY!
IT'S SO QUIET... IS ALL OF FRANCE LIKE THIS?
TH' WORLD, GUY, TH' WORLD! THERE'S ENOUGH RADIATION HERE TO TOAST MARSHMALLOWS... MEGA-DEATH CITY
"...ONLY A FEW GRUBS AND INSECTS ARE VISIBLE..."
UH, BEN... DOESN'T TAKING NOTES AT THE END OF THE WORLD STRIKE YOU A TAD... REDUNDANT?
"...THE SEAS ARE ENTIRELY STERILE..."
...BUT, MARCUS, WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE HUMAN RACE?
FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK.
HERE SHE COMES NOW...


DR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN... I GIVE YOU THE **HUMAN RACE**...
SNURK?
GAFF GAFF
TA-**DA**!
PRETTY IMPRESSIVE, HUH?
IMAGINE, BEN, THE ANCESTORS OF **THAT** SAID "GOD IS DEAD"! WELL, I'M STILL HERE... AND **GEEKY**'S ALL THAT'S LEFT. IT'S YOUR PLAY, PAL. **RUN** WITH IT... HOW DO WE **TERMINATE**...? LIGHTNING BOLT? SLEEPING PILLS? SHARP STICK? WHAT..?
NO... **NO!** I WILL NOT! THEE HAST MADE OF THE WORLD A **CHARNEL HOUSE** BUT I WILL NOT BE THY **EXECUTIONER**!
NOW, DON'T GO ALL **QUAKER** ON ME, BEN...
BZZZ
'COURSE, WE **COULD** USE HER TO START HUMANS OVER AGAIN... THE WHOLE EVE AN' ADAM SCENARIO.
HMM... GENES ARE PRETTY **TWISTED** THO... PROBABLY JUST GET **MUPPETS** OR SOMETHING...
NOPE, BETTER TO CUT OUR LOSSES ON THIS ONE... HA! "GOD IS DEAD!" IRONY-WISE, THAT'S **RICH**!
TRUE. GOD IS **NOT** DEAD.
BZZ
HE IS MAD.

TO BE CONTINUED...

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni

I received the Diamondback Deck yesterday .... along with the late Christmas cards and the latest 'overdue' notices .... and was blown away! I'm running right out to get another couple of decks so I can immediately start sucking friends into a playing circle. I see a great future looming .... like the punchline of one of Elrod's bad jokes -- that's a literary reference, son -- I say, I see a great future ahead for the noblest of the frittersome pastimes of CEREBUS' epoch. In a few short cons we'll see the games rooms given over heavily to Diamondback .... if only to keep the costume parade losers from going out and beating up on people at random just to let off steam! Fan Guests of Honour will routinely be kidnapped merely to play for shares of the ransom! As Diamondback grows to eclipse D-and-D and even SCRABBLE, there will rise a public call for a return to the gold standard. No one will trust paper money any more .... and besides, they'll need gold crowns to play with. The really high-class joints will trash their booze lists in favour of a return to the ale standard and they'll return at the same time to the sawdust standard on their floors .... because Diamondback players will demand authenticity. Within weeks, the first arrest will be made for illegal gaming at Diamondback. But the suave defendant will be let off unconditionally basing his successful defence on the principle that, the way any seasoned player goes at the game, there is **no** element of chance involved in it. The papers will carry front-page photos of this champion of The Cause showing clearly his stout sword hanging at hip and a mean-looking Gerger Mark I peeking coyly out the top of one rustic boot. Some (the as-yet-uninitiated minority) will wonder at the nature of his dress; tunic and cloak in aardvark grey .... and, oh, yes, the unmistakeable tight black breeches that mark him as a sharpie. And that evil glint in his roguish eyes .... Within the year, Contact Bridge clubs will have disbanded in confusion to be replaced by Diamondback Parlours. As supporters of the game take their majority positions on most legislative assemblies in the land, following a sweep by CEREBUS-ticket candidates in the general elections, new laws will quickly be enacted allowing all-night sales of alcoholic beverages in properly licensed houses of prostitution. In short, the stage is set for the dawn of a bright new age ....

But seriously folks .... who needs reality? This is not the first time the creation of an expert fictioneer has been made real and palpable by the sheer will of the masses and finally accepted into the language and practice of the western world. Look at the French Revolution...and toothpaste...and MOTHRA...and so on, and so on, and so on... Topical these days is the debate about Three-Handed Whist. The latest, best evidence has the ideas springing fully-framed and feathered into the mind of that late-recognized genius Charles Darwin, albeit in a dream. (You have to do something to while away the delerious hours of seasickness aboard a heaving ten-gunner headed for heathen climes ....) However, on wakening, Darwin reviewed his notes, mistranslated his feverish jottings and came up with Five-Card Draw, not to be confused with the game that currently bears that name which was contrived in someone else's dream in the Colorado Territory in 1831. (What a strange coincidence ....) In the end, Darwin called his popular game of chance Straight Draw or, Natural Selection, in which the player is dealt 23 from each of two decks, the fall of the cards setting the pattern for the rest of the game, which can take years, even decades to play out. Unfortunately, this entrancing past-time is still officially non-existent in Tennesee.

.... But seriously folks .... really, this time .... I was delighted that the Diamondback Deck turned out so well. I'll be spreading the word here in Canada's capital as well as through my extensive correspondence network. I have already tried getting close friends to play with me, but I keep getting accused of making up the rules as I go along. That is only half right. And I won't be able to cheat at all when they finally DO get the hang of the game.

In the prevailing spirit of the computer age, I propose we establish a correspondence network for serious Diamondbackers. We could call it a user group. That could lead to a software exchange .... you know, every game of chance has it's sure-fire systems, usually drummed up by some retired math professor unsatisfied with old age and being out of the tenure game, in general. I even have a few off-beat ideas about alternate games that could be played with the same cards .... like fish with a bridge deck, you know? .... But I still can't figure out how to run Space Invaders on Diamondback with anything under 17 decks .... (— oops! Just a bit of psycho-heartburn, there .... My morning with "The Beginners Guide To Microprocessors" just came back on me a little, that's all....) I have some interesting market news. A guy offered me my choice of his first-born male child or $200.00 for my CEREBUS No. 1 the other day. If I was of a mood to treat this sentimental treasure as a simple investment .... I'd be able to retire by the time I'm ready to retire (next year) .... But that's not all. In another recent conversation with a fringe comic freak I idly mentioned the fantastic success of CEREBUS thereby making an opportunity to drop your name, and he asked me, "How come no CEREBUS ploughshare project?" He works for the Government, you see, and talks like that all the time. In short, the fellow was amazed there were no CEREBUS mugs, calendars, desk pads, hasty-notes, or emblazoned undergarments available. I pointed out there have been some tasteful, thoughtful probings of the CEREBUS aftermarket, but nothing on a large scale. I mentioned the CEREBUS stuffed toy, the 'Dictator' T'shirt, the recent 'SINS' portfolio and of course the Diamondback deck. He wasn't impressed. In fact, he suggested a whole new innovative marketing approach for CEREBUS THE CONCEPT. In the radio music biz we call it crossover. You know, like when Dolly Parton does a country tune up-beat enough to be played in the contemporary format as well? You crash two markets. My friend (and I use that term purely as a convenience) suggested we rush a CEREBUS CUBE onto the market for the annual attack of winter doldrums that millions suffer each February. You'll recall, back in the early '70's it was Pet Rocks. We could make a million .... (but how many could we sell?)

That's about all from what one ascetic columnist here in Ottawa calls .... 'Ennui on the Rideau'. Deni, you should never have admitted, in the publisher's note in No. 26, that the mail is THE EVENT .... To me that's a worse temptation than being within ten feet of Margaret Trudeau with a fresh banana cream pie in my hands! Love to you both and stay well. It must be hell getting out another issue every 20 days. I'd hate to see your health suffer .... and I'd hate to be without my CEREBUS every three weeks. The arrival of the latest issue has become THE EVENT for many of us who hang around Joel's comic shop on Willion Street in the Market!

Glen Lisle
No. 1, 197 Cumberland Street
Ottawa, Ont. K1N 7H4

I'm sorry Glen, I was thinking about something else. Mind running that by me again?

Dave, Deni, Cerebus -

What a rotten weekend. Only two weeks of college left before I graduate, so the entire week-end was wasted working on final projects in two classes, and studying for finals in two others. Right now I'm supposed to be sleeping so I can wake up in three hours and go to work (graveyard shift), but it seems there is a bawdy orgy going on in the apartment below me. What else was I to do but grab my Cerebus collection (No. 4 and up) and begin reading.

Being able to read these buggers in one lump sitting (lump sitting?) does a wonderful thing for a person. Makes me wish I had a friend like our friendly (?) neighborhood earth-pig running interference for me. On the other hand, it makes computor-programming look as easy as falling down.

Anyway, I just wanted to say thanks for giving me some calm

cont'd on pg. 33

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

during this pre-graduation storm. You have definitely restored some of my sanity. Oh, by the way, one teensy-tinsy request: When are you going to honour us with the return of Jaka? I'm just dying to see what Cerebus' tongue looks like!

Danny M. Davids
6430 Chippewa Rd. No. 3
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80915

You should have come downstairs and joined in .... I didn't get home until four o'clock. I was blind for three days.

Dear Dave and Deni

Well it's been one year since my last letter was printed, so ego-wise that calls for the second annual installment of "Cohen loves the aardvark". When Cerebus entered lest those many moons ago in No. 26, I didn't really go for the story line until the introduction of the regency elf. Talk about ways to wake up your readers! By the time you brought in the Moon Roach, I was half-expecting it. I just **love** schizophrenic characters! (DC's Firestorm being the one exception) Now all I'm waiting for is the long-awaited appearance of (wait for it) Lord Julius!

Since I've been a Marx Brothers fan from my birth (possibly earlier), I recognized him right away, and got some untypical laughs out of his excellence while my peers looked on, certain I was crazed. Do you plan to reprint your 'Prince Valiant' spoof from the Buyer's Guide of a couple of years back?

To sum up, I just have to say that CEREBUS is by far the best comic on the current market. I'm looking forward to a satire on Daredevil - perhaps a paraplegic superhero?

Keep up the work!

Jeffery Cohen
50 Shelley Lane
Great Neck, New York 11023

The "Prince Valiant" spoof (all ten pages) will be reprinted in Swords of Cerebus Volume 4. Just to keep my streak alive at three consecutive issues; if there isn't enough in Swords to make it worth buying, don't buy it.

Dear Dave and Deni

Actually, I've been reading CEREBUS for a couple of years now. Sorry I didn't write alot sooner, since I imagine you needed the moral support alot more in those days. Well I just had to say "thanks" for what has developed into a distinct comic, and a unique approach to storytelling. By next year there will be scores of adolescent comic artists ripping-off your style. Not that I'm particularly looking forward to it -- it just seems somewhat inevitable.

Myself: I'm no one in particular yet, but I've been working on it for the past ten or so years. I hope that the mark I might someday leave would attain a similar level of respect and admiration which you've qualified yourself for time and time again.

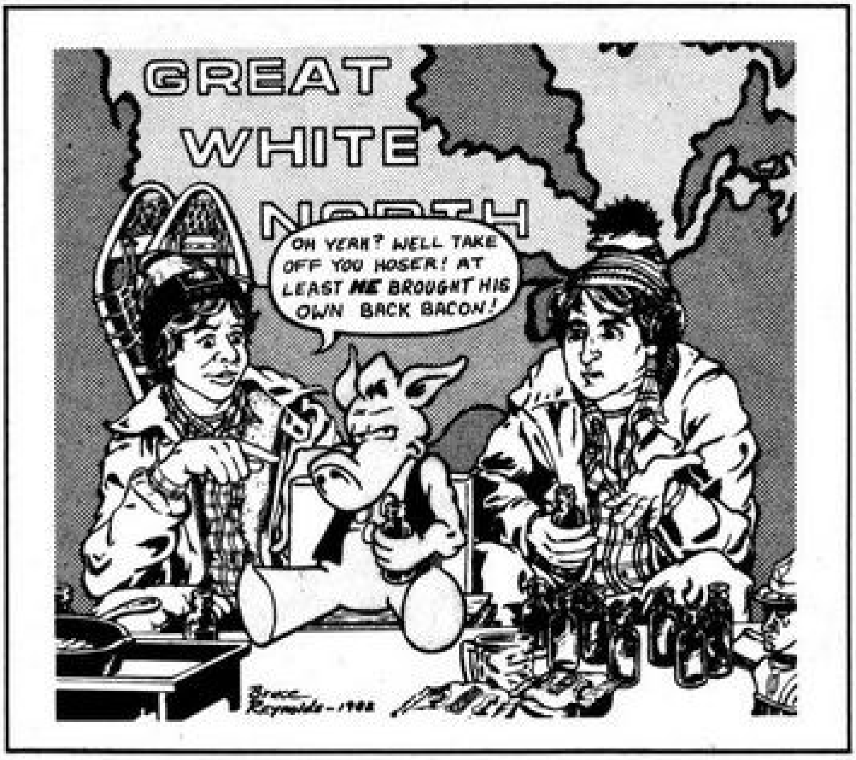
Good luck to both of you for now, and for all the years to come.

Enough of this ....

I drew for you, this here picture - like drawing thing. It's a token, of course, so hey? Thanks.

Bruce Reynolds
1841½ 12th Street
Moline, Ill. 61265

Okay - uh - my topic for today - is-like-how everyone seems to think that everyone in the -um-Great White North ah, like, sound the same, eh? That really cheeses me right off and-like- I hope all o'you --ah-- Americans will stop being such complete hosers about it, eh? Like, take off if you can't even say something nice or anything. Jeez.


GREAT WHITE NORTH
OH YEAH? WELL TAKE OFF YOU HOSER! AT LEAST ME BROUGHT HIS OWN BACK BACON!
Bruce Reynolds - 1982

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dave and Deni

Cerebus No. 33, or, "Friction", if you will, was the most enjoyable of the whole 'Moon Roach' bit.

In a way, I'll be sorry to see them go, but you and I know that you never let a good concept go to waste. In other words, after the current stint, I'm sure that they'll return at some convenient future date to further the fouling up of Cerebus' life.

By the way, are you aware that Cerebus is one of the only titles you actually need research volumes (or a **very** sharp memory and wit) to follow? The plots are **that** thick (and what if "the plot thickens" even further?). Blbtha ha ha ha! (he says insanely!)

Keep it up (or down, or however you keep it).

John A. Wilcox
40 Hales Court
Westport, CT. 06680

*I've got research volumes **and** a very sharp memory and I still get lost from time time. Blbtha ha ha ha, indeed.*

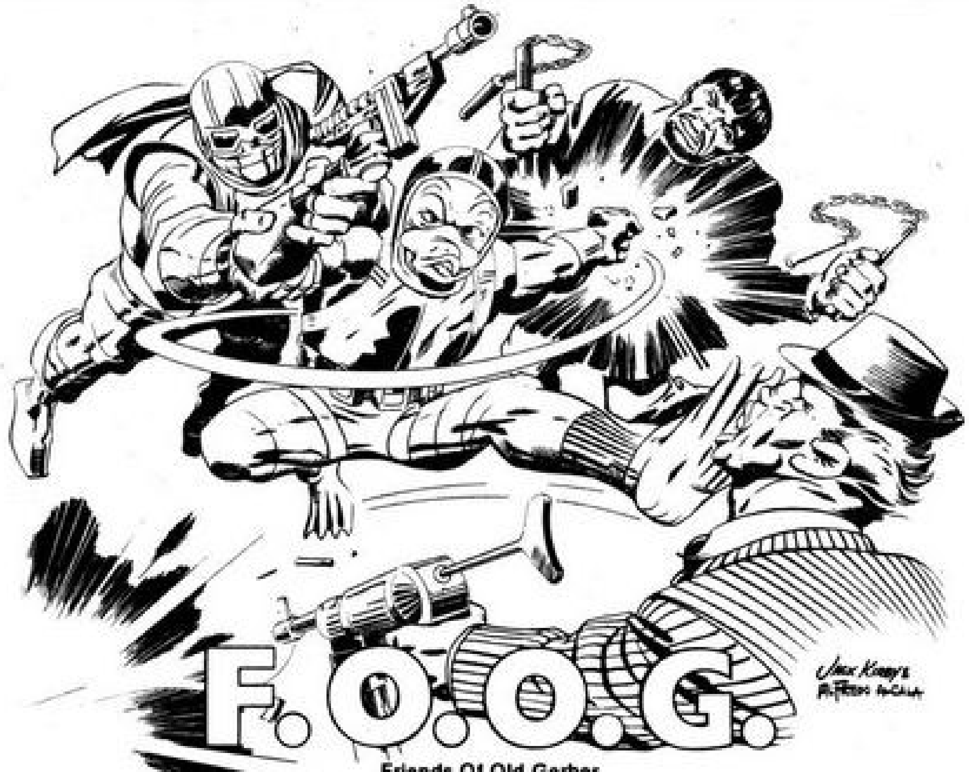
Dear Dave and Deni

The artwork of issue 32 was effective, largely due to Dave's extensive use of solid black spaces. Not just shadows, it included backgrounds, sillouettes, clothes; it suggested mystery, danger, spiritual darkness. Characters floated in an inky sea.

Speaking of ink -- most comics don't do this because their production methods won't turn out rich, solid blacks. Most comic black tones are grey and muddy. Why are your tones so nice and dark?

Leighton Ker
3167 18th St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20010

Cerebus is as important to Preney Print and Litho as he is to us. When do you suppose was the last time someone at the World Colour Plant in Sparta read a copy of Spider-Man?



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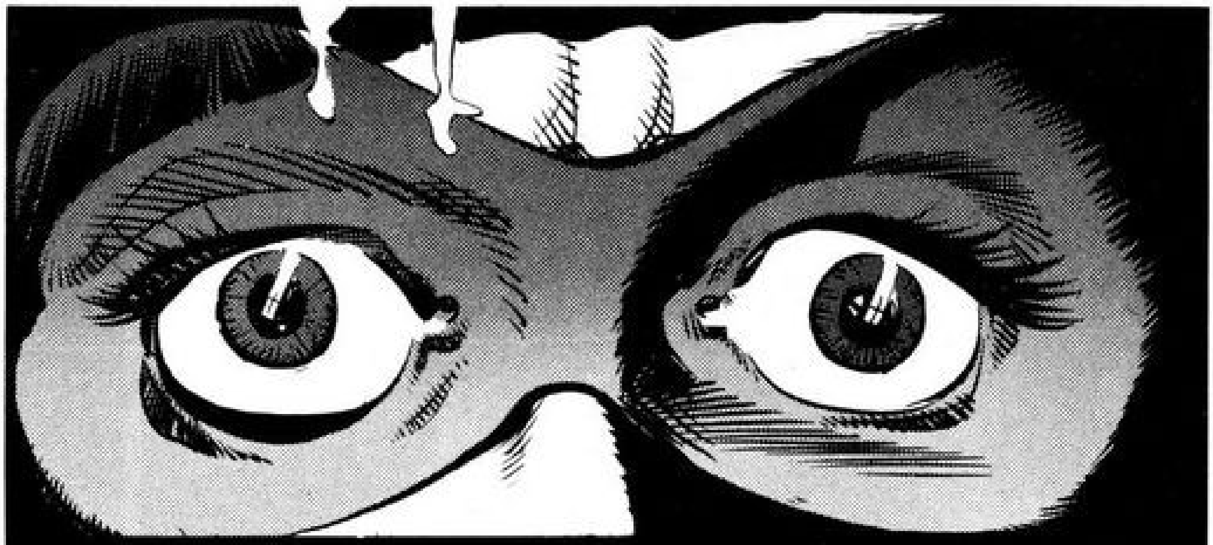

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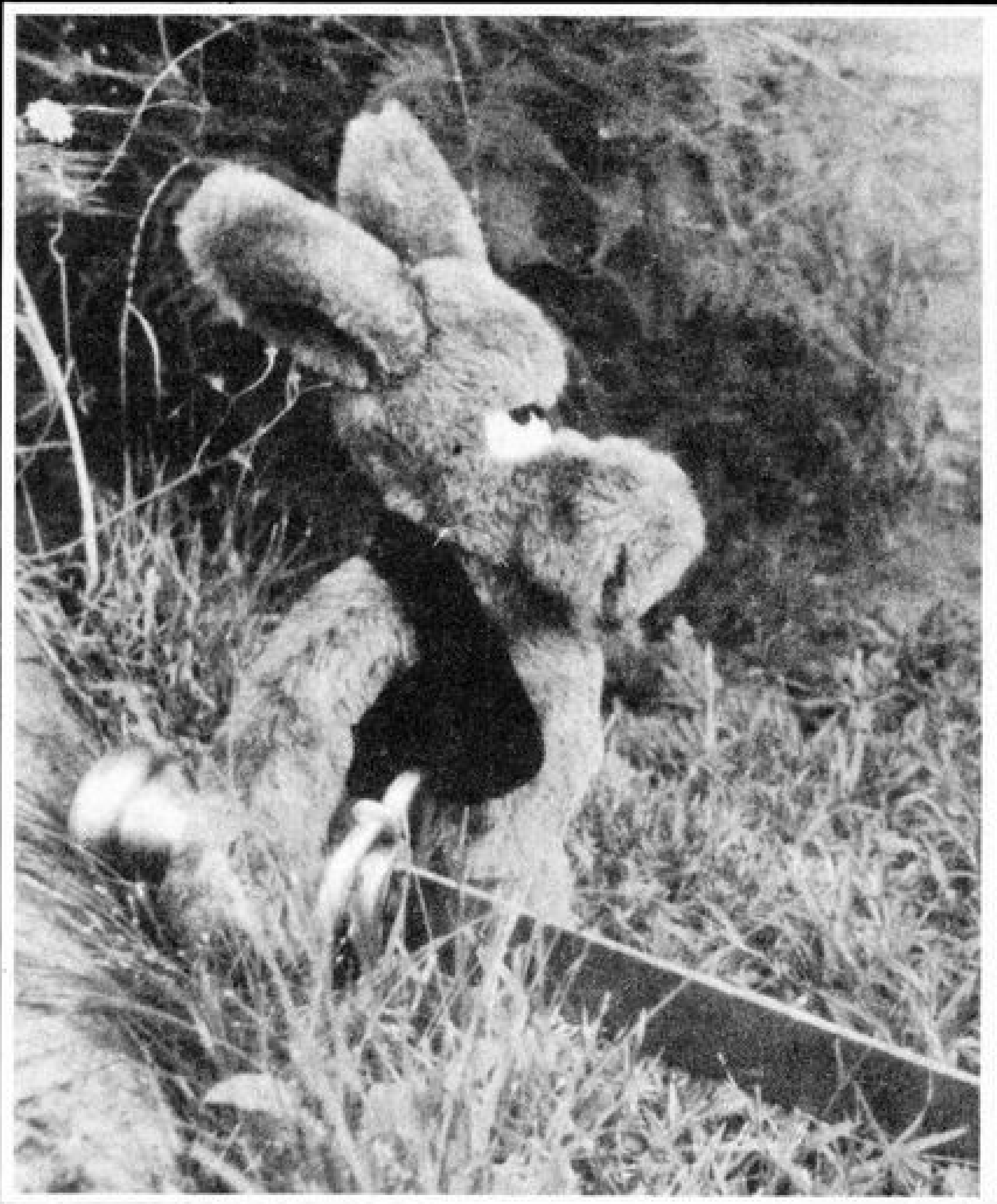

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Sheila M. Watson
Apt. 6-549 Victoria St. S.
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2M 3A8

Dear Dave

This letter is difficult for me, as in general I believe if you don't have something nasty to say, you shouldn't say anything (I do, after all, have an image to maintain); however, "Friction" was just SO overwhelmingly good that I found myself unable to hold back any longer. After all, one must always make exceptions for the exceptional, and CEREBUS is definitely exceptional.

As a greedy barbarian type trying desperately to make my way in the modern civilized world, I have always identified very strongly with the Earth-pig Born. Like Cerebus, those of us in the Atomic Age whose only goals are wine, food, a warm bed, and a sack of gold, are continually frustrated by the (to us) pointless machinations of those who lust after President Wiesshaupt's vaster goal of power. Like Estarcian in the Aardvarkian Age, the West in the Middle Ages missed its unique chance to change the equation that requires the acquisition of wealth through the pursuit of political influence. Cerebus is not dumb -- he's clever, practical, and shrewd. Yet, in the long run he is always bested because he simply doesn't understand how the rest of them think. Twice in the past two issues he has outguessed Astoria (which is not easy; so far the only conclusion I can draw about her is that she's never what she seems). But it is Astoria, not Cerebus, who is equipped to survive and flourish in the political power games of Iest. All Cerebus seems able to do on his own is get upset. He screams that he wants "no more doing business with damn fools"; yet in the power-oriented upper society of Esarcion, that's the only way to get your wine, food, warm bed, and sack of gold.

As with Cerebus, it is generally assumed that I can't take care of myself (although, like Cerebus, I steadfastly maintain that I can SO take care of myself). Fortunately, I have been much more successful than Cerebus in the quest for the stuff that earth-piglet dreams are made of, primarily because I found my own Astoria three years ago. In my case, however, the alliance is less risky, since my Astoria anologue is a lot less manipulative of his allies and a little more scrupulous (my wife claims this is because he's a "mere male" and thus not equipped for the real thing). Also, I married a hard-headed survival-oriented type who keeps me from offending my elves (every barbarian needs a wife to keep him in line).

In a very real way, Cerebus speaks directly to the frustration all of us small businessmen feel. For Cerebus's sake, I hope his current success lasts a long time. It's no fun watching the "damn fools" run off with all the gold while you're slogging through the mud smelling like the back end of a horse. Alas, it looks bleak. The arrival of Elrod (what a marvelously hilarious ending to an hilariously marvelous issue) always seems to precede the Earth-Pig's worst calamities, so I figure he's got at the most three issues before it all goes to hell in a handbasket. Until then, we're all rooting for him out here (nasty that I am, I hooked all my friends, too). Good luck to him, and good luck to his creator. You are both very precious in this world of ours.

The Red Sweater
a.k.a. Bruce Parrello
214 Willow Rd.
Streamwood, Ill. 60103

I'm glad you made an exception this time to your rule of saying something nasty. As to everything going to hell in a handbasket three issues after Elrod's return -- Well, you'll just have to wait and see.

FANTACON '81

Second in a series of four photo's by William C. Johnson of Dave, Deni, and friends at FANTACON in Albany, N.Y., September 18-19, 1981.

Wendy (famous the Elf) Pini and Dave (Famous the Aardvark) Sim play a quick round of Mutual Admiration Society while concealing deformed four-fingered hands from each other.

ISSN 0712-7774

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

36
MAR

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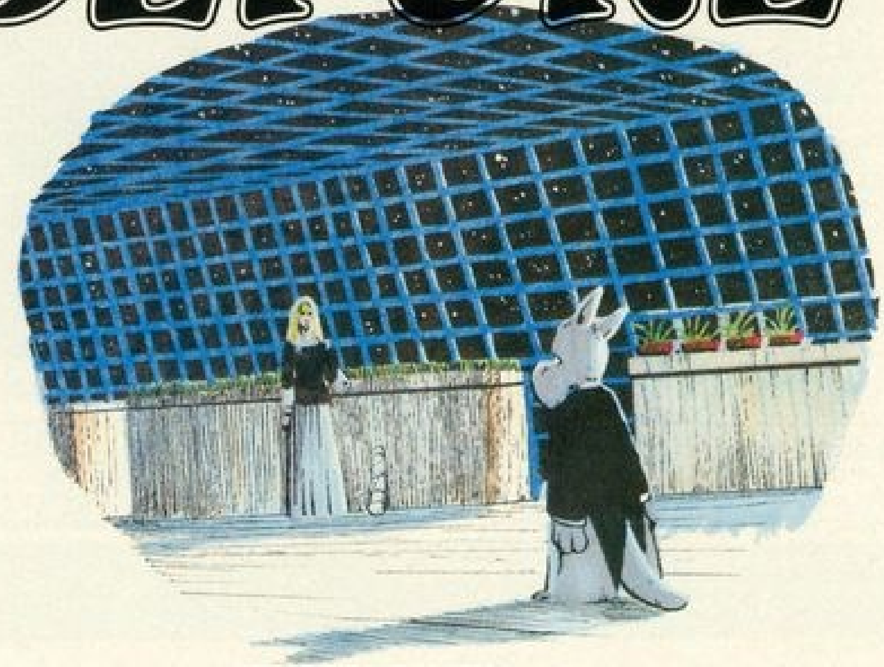
THE NIGHT BEFORE



A Note from the Publisher

During the last six months, or so, I've been so busy just trying to keep up with the growth Cerebus has had, that I haven't really sat down and said anything in these editorials.

The F.O.O.G. (friends of ol'Gerber) portfolio, that some of you may have heard about will be out in April from the same people who distribute Cerebus and Swords of Cerebus. There will be ten plates in it and an illustrated envelope drawn by Jack Kirby (!) and inked by Alcala. The plates were drawn by Barry Windsor-Smith, Bernie Wrightson, Jeff Jones, Mike Kaluta, Charles Vess, Gene Colan (inked by Dave Sim), Marshall Rogers Frank Thorne, Wendy Pini (inked by Dave Sim), and, of course, Dave Sim. As you can see, it is quite a varied list of artists, showing the wide diversity in this field. It seems, somehow, quite exciting to me that I am lucky enough to live at a time when there is so much going on in alternative publishing. It's an ever-shifting landscape, so you have to be alert to keep up with the changes happening within it. It's not always easy . . . and I can well understand how some folks have gotten lost in the shuffle.

During the time between last issue and this one, Dave and I paid a little visit to Richard and Wendy Pini. I must admit that there isn't usually much time for either the Pini's or Dave and I to visit as usually one of us is working on a deadline. But as it turned out, Richard and Wendy had just brought No. 12 to the printers the day before and we had just brought No. 35 to the printers a few days before that. Who knows when our schedules will coincide again -- so we thought we'd take advantage of it.

Dave and I had never driven down to New York before, so it was really fun seeing all those mountains. Ontarians aren't used to mountains.

The nice thing about visiting the Pini's is that they do very much the same thing we do. It makes comparing notes that much easier.

The two days went by quickly, but I think a lot of good came out of it. Whether or not it actually made concrete changes in what any of us do, I couldn't say. It sure feels nice to know you aren't the only ones facing the kinds of ups and downs that Dave and I experience because of Cerebus. It just seems to me that the more I see Richard and Wendy, the more I like them.

It wasn't what most people would consider an exciting two days, but it was bizarre to watch someone else (for me, Richard) doing basically what I do every day. I spent the first day zooming around Poughkeepsie with Richard as he photocopied artwork, planned an ad, and checked out the printing of Elfquest No. 12. We printed issues 23-25 at their printers in Wappingers Falls, so I had a strong feeling of dejavu there. This is partly because I've spent so much time in printing companies lately, and also because, since Cerebus had once been printed there,, they knew who I was when Richard introduced me to them. The whole thing was like watching myself, in a fun-house mirror, seeing Richard checking out Elfquest at his printers. I guess it's because it's what I do at my printers.

The four of us did all the usual "couple things". We went out for dinner, went window-shopping after, and then sat around at their place, talking. Unfortunately for the Comics Journal, there was no tape recorder going at that session. It went on for about four hours, covering everything from people watching you eat at a convention (which got four votes of least-favorite fan activity), to the problems encountered with walking across a crowded dealers room at a convention (which I seem to be the only one with no complaints on).

I have a feeling that this was probably when the elves took our hubcaps. Honest, we only had two left on the car when we got home!! But it's OK, they left us a parking ticket.

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 36 MARCH, 1982

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Deni Sim

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Welcome to Heaven, Dr. Franklin... Part Three

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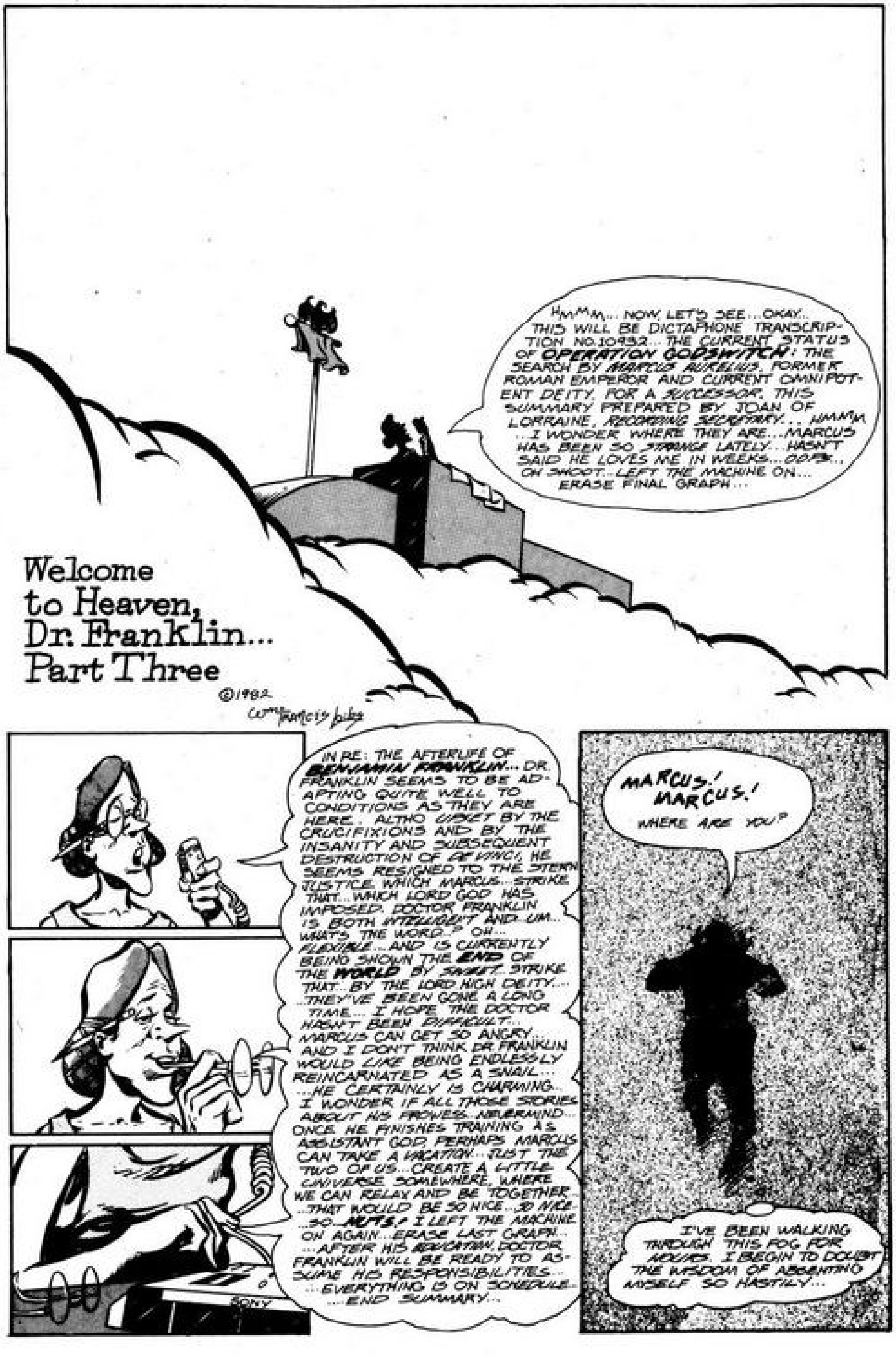
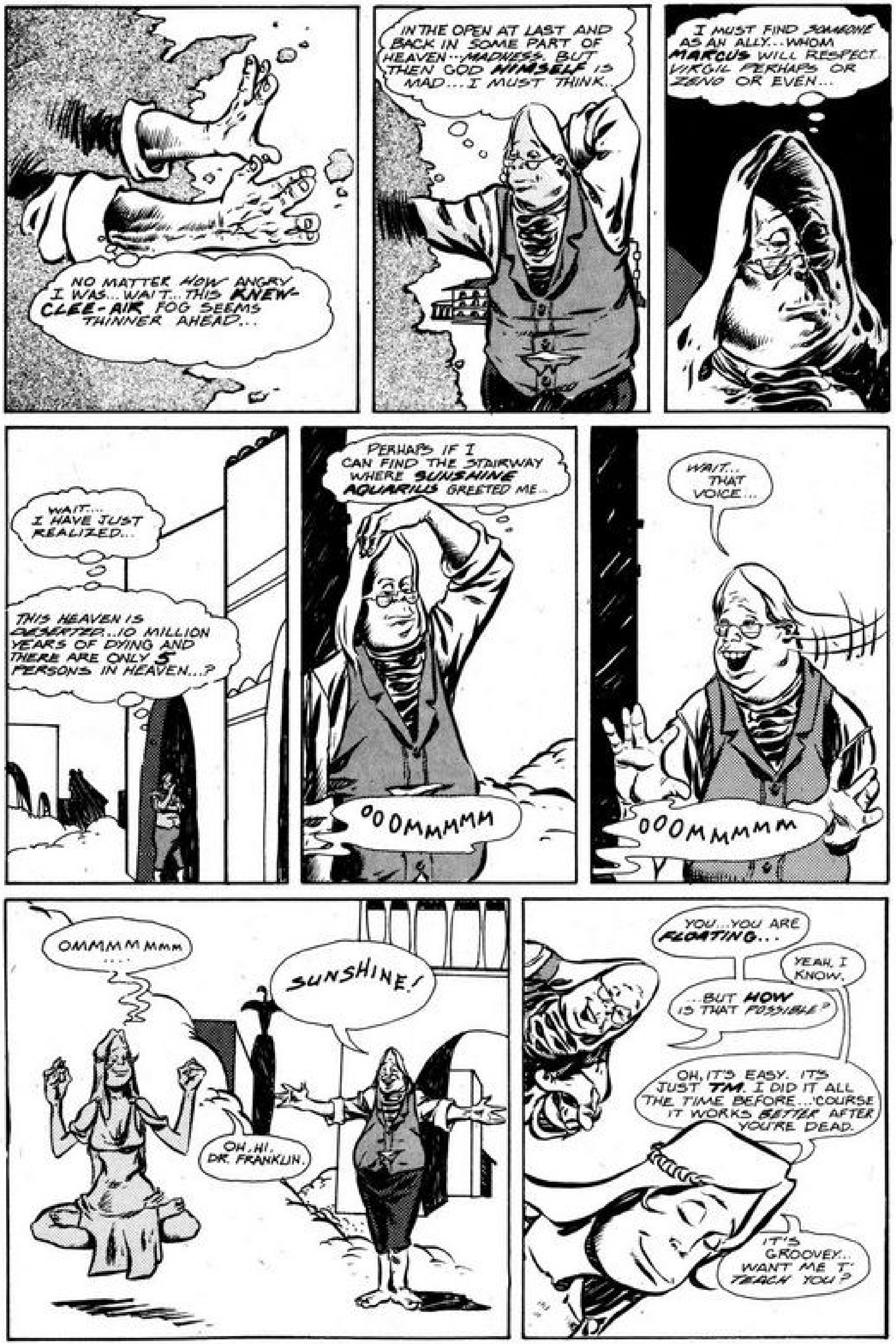
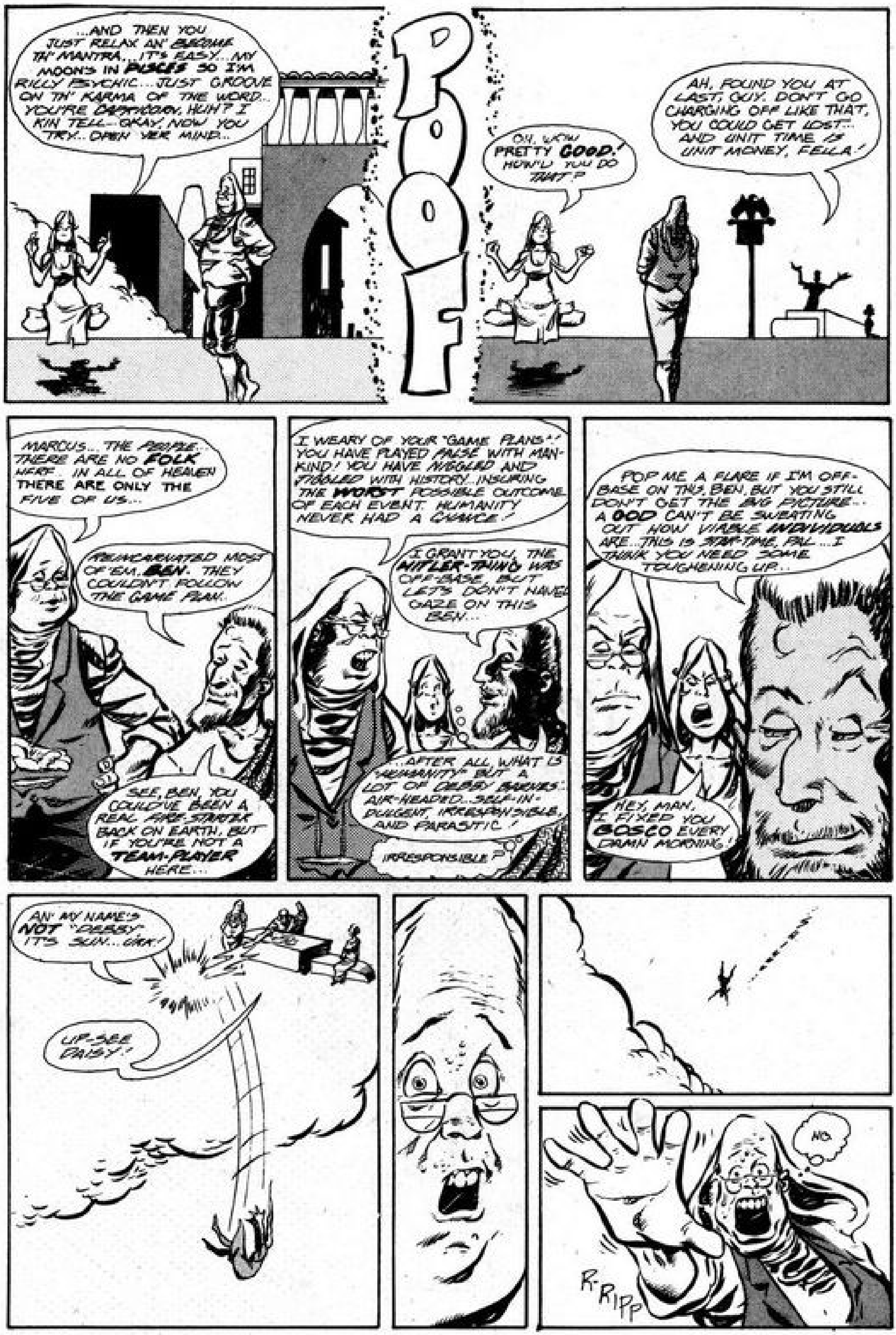
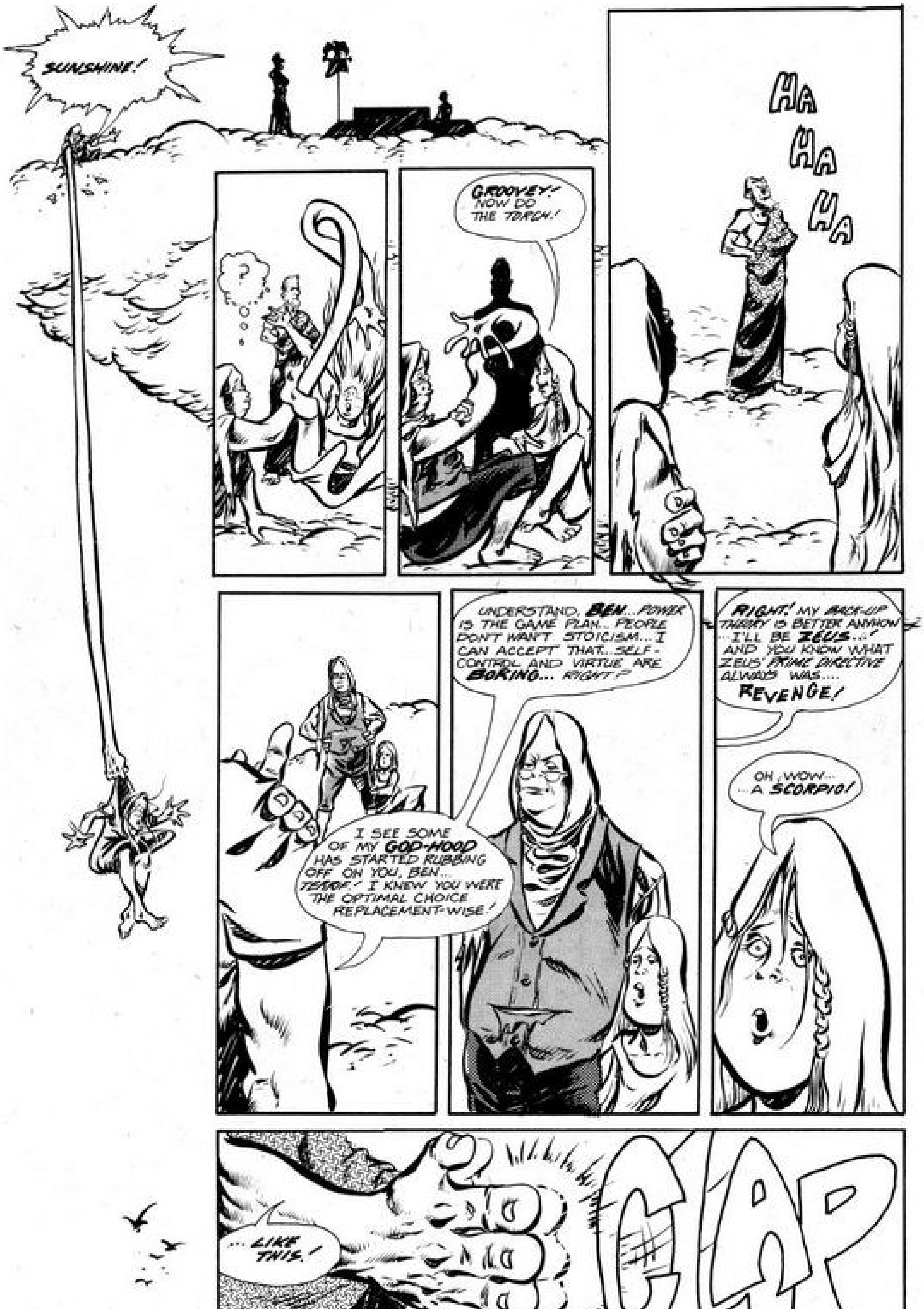
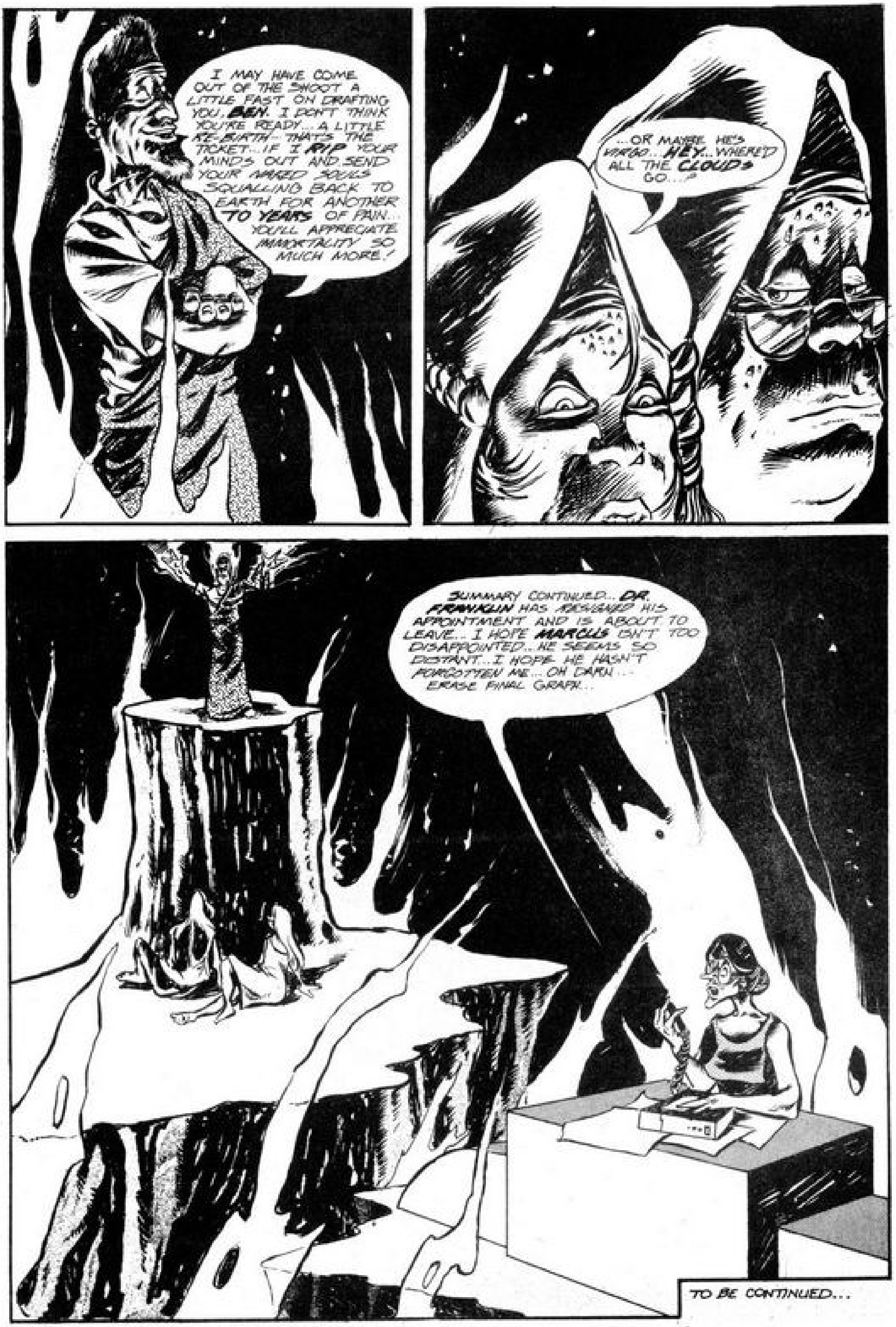

HMMMM... NOW, LET'S SEE... OKAY... THIS WILL BE DICTAPHONE TRANSCRIPTION NO.10932... THE CURRENT STATUS OF OPERATION GODSWITCH: THE SEARCH BY MARCUS AURELIUS, FORMER ROMAN EMPEROR AND CURRENT OMNIPOTENT DEITY, FOR A SUCCESSOR. THIS SUMMARY PREPARED BY JOAN OF LORRAINE, RECORDING SECRETARY... HMMMM ...I WONDER WHERE THEY ARE... MARCUS HAS BEEN SO STRANGE LATELY... HASN'T SAID HE LOVES ME IN WEEKS... OOPS... OH SHOOT... LEFT THE MACHINE ON... ERASE FINAL GRAPH...
IN RE: THE AFTERLIFE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN... DR. FRANKLIN SEEMS TO BE ADAPTING QUITE WELL TO CONDITIONS AS THEY ARE HERE. ALTHO UPSET BY THE CRUCIFIXIONS AND BY THE INSANITY AND SUBSEQUENT DESTRUCTION OF DE VINCI, HE SEEMS RESIGNED TO THE STERN JUSTICE WHICH MARCUS... STRIKE THAT... WHICH LORD GOD HAS IMPOSED. DOCTOR FRANKLIN IS BOTH INTELLIGENT AND... UM... WHAT'S THE WORD..? OH... FLEXIBLE... AND IS CURRENTLY BEING SHOWN THE END OF THE WORLD BY SWEET... STRIKE THAT... BY THE LORD HIGH DEITY... ...THEY'VE BEEN GONE A LONG TIME... I HOPE THE DOCTOR HASN'T BEEN DIFFICULT... MARCUS CAN GET SO ANGRY... AND I DON'T THINK DR. FRANKLIN WOULD LIKE BEING ENDLESSLY REINCARNATED AS A SNAIL... ...HE CERTAINLY IS CHARMING... I WONDER IF ALL THOSE STORIES ABOUT HIS PROWESS... NEVERMIND... ONCE HE FINISHES TRAINING AS ASSISTANT GOD, PERHAPS MARCUS CAN TAKE A VACATION... JUST THE TWO OF US... CREATE A LITTLE UNIVERSE SOMEWHERE, WHERE WE CAN RELAX AND BE TOGETHER... ...THAT WOULD BE SO NICE... SO NICE ...SO... NUTS! I LEFT THE MACHINE ON AGAIN... ERASE LAST GRAPH... ...AFTER HIS EDUCATION, DOCTOR FRANKLIN WILL BE READY TO ASSUME HIS RESPONSIBILITIES... ...EVERYTHING IS ON SCHEDULE... ...END SUMMARY...
SONY
MARCUS! MARCUS! WHERE ARE YOU?
I'VE BEEN WALKING THROUGH THIS FOG FOR HOURS. I BEGIN TO DOUBT THE WISDOM OF ABSENTING MYSELF SO HASTILY...


NO MATTER HOW ANGRY I WAS... WAIT... THIS KNEW-CLEE-AIR FOG SEEMS THINNER AHEAD...
IN THE OPEN AT LAST AND BACK IN SOME PART OF HEAVEN... MADNESS. BUT THEN GOD HIMSELF IS MAD... I MUST THINK...
I MUST FIND SOMEONE AS AN ALLY... WHOM MARCUS WILL RESPECT. VIRGIL PERHAPS OR ZENO OR EVEN...
WAIT.... I HAVE JUST REALIZED...
THIS HEAVEN IS DESERTED... 10 MILLION YEARS OF DYING AND THERE ARE ONLY 5 PERSONS IN HEAVEN...?
PERHAPS IF I CAN FIND THE STAIRWAY WHERE SUNSHINE AQUARIUS GREETED ME...
OOOMMMMM
WAIT... THAT VOICE...
OOOMMMMM
OMMMMMMM ....
SUNSHINE!
OH, HI, DR. FRANKLIN.
YOU... YOU ARE FLOATING...
YEAH, I KNOW.
...BUT HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
OH, IT'S EASY. IT'S JUST TM. I DID IT ALL THE TIME BEFORE... 'COURSE IT WORKS BETTER AFTER YOU'RE DEAD.
IT'S GROOVEY... WANT ME T' TEACH YOU?


...AND THEN YOU JUST RELAX AN' BECOME TH' MANTRA... IT'S EASY... MY MOON'S IN PISCES SO I'M RILLY PSYCHIC... JUST GROOVE ON TH' KARMA OF THE WORD... YOU'RE CAPRICORN, HUH? I KIN TELL... OKAY, NOW YOU TRY... OPEN YER MIND...
POOF
OH, WOW PRETTY GOOD! HOW'D YOU DO THAT?
AH, FOUND YOU AT LAST, GUY. DON'T GO CHARGING OFF LIKE THAT, YOU COULD GET LOST... AND UNIT TIME IS UNIT MONEY, FELLA!
MARCUS... THE PEOPLE... THERE ARE NO FOLK HERE... IN ALL OF HEAVEN THERE ARE ONLY THE FIVE OF US...
REINCARNATED MOST OF 'EM, BEN. THEY COULDN'T FOLLOW THE GAME PLAN.
SEE, BEN, YOU COULD'VE BEEN A REAL FIRE-STARTER BACK ON EARTH, BUT IF YOU'RE NOT A TEAM-PLAYER HERE...
I WEARY OF YOUR "GAME PLANS"! YOU HAVE PLAYED FALSE WITH MANKIND! YOU HAVE NIGGLED AND FIDDLED WITH HISTORY... INSURING THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF EACH EVENT. HUMANITY NEVER HAD A CHANCE!
I GRANT YOU, THE HITLER-THING WAS OFF-BASE, BUT LET'S DON'T HAVE GAZE ON THIS BEN...
...AFTER ALL, WHAT IS "HUMANITY" BUT A LOT OF DEBBY BARNES: AIR-HEADED... SELF-INDULGENT, IRRESPONSIBLE, AND PARASITIC!
IRRESPONSIBLE?
POP ME A FLARE IF I'M OFF-BASE ON THIS, BEN, BUT YOU STILL DON'T GET THE BIG PICTURE... A GOD CAN'T BE SWEATING OUT HOW VIABLE INDIVIDUALS ARE... THIS IS STAR-TIME, PAL... I THINK YOU NEED SOME TOUGHENING UP...
HEY, MAN, I FIXED YOU BOSCO EVERY DAMN MORNING!
AN' MY NAME'S NOT "DEBBY" IT'S SUN... URK!
UP-SEE DAISY!
NO
R-RIPP


SUNSHINE!
?
GROOVEY! NOW DO THE TORCH!
HA HA HA HA
UNDERSTAND, BEN...POWER IS THE GAME PLAN... PEOPLE DON'T WANT STOICISM...I CAN ACCEPT THAT...SELF-CONTROL AND VIRTUE ARE BORING... RIGHT?
I SEE SOME OF MY GOD-HOOD HAS STARTED RUBBING OFF ON YOU, BEN... TERRIF! I KNEW YOU WERE THE OPTIMAL CHOICE REPLACEMENT-WISE!
RIGHT! MY BACK-UP THEORY IS BETTER ANYHOW ...I'LL BE ZEUS...' AND YOU KNOW WHAT ZEUS' PRIME DIRECTIVE ALWAYS WAS..... REVENGE!
OH, WOW... ...A SCORPIO!
...LIKE THIS!
CLAP


I MAY HAVE COME OUT OF THE SHOOT A LITTLE FAST ON DRAFTING YOU, BEN. I DON'T THINK YOU'RE READY... A LITTLE RE-BIRTH... THAT'S THE TICKET... IF I RIP YOUR MINDS OUT AND SEND YOUR NAKED SOULS SQUALLING BACK TO EARTH FOR ANOTHER 70 YEARS OF PAIN... YOU'LL APPRECIATE IMMORTALITY SO MUCH MORE!
...OR MAYBE HE'S VIRGO... HEY... WHERE'D ALL THE CLOUDS GO...?
SUMMARY CONTINUED... DR. FRANKLIN HAS RESIGNED HIS APPOINTMENT AND IS ABOUT TO LEAVE... I HOPE MARCUS ISN'T TOO DISAPPOINTED... HE SEEMS SO DISTANT... I HOPE HE HASN'T FORGOTTEN ME... OH DARN... ERASE FINAL GRAFH...
TO BE CONTINUED...

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,

You know there's something wrong with you when you buy a five dollar paper back book full of material you already have, to read maybe eight pages of stuff. But this is what happened to me with Swords of Cerebus No. 3. And I know what it is: I've become an aardvark fanatic.

As far as I can tell, I was one of the first on the East Coast having started with No. 6 (see, this friend of mine who was going to school in Michigan turned me on to the book; who says all the fads get started on the West Coast?) Cerebus has become more and more important to me as a comic book reader as I've begun to lose interest in the main stream stuff (after all, how many times can you watch the universe explode?)

Now that I've proclaimed my staunch admiration for your work, I have one criticism and one request.

First the criticism: do you know how long it's been since Cerebus has killed anybody? I mean, I'm not particularly bloodthirsty by nature, but he is supposed to be deadly, right? (Remember the first issue where it was mentioned that Cerebus was the finest fighter to enter the city - or something along those lines . . . I don't have the book with me). These days all he does is go around threatening people. It seems to me he'll have to back his threats with action eventually . . .

Now the request: I am presently working at DAYTIME TV magazine (or, as we like to call it, the Magazine at the end of the universe). Don't ask how I ended up here, of all places, after four years at Cornell University, suffice to say that I am working off enough bad Karma to clean up half a dozen previous lives completely.

I spend most of my time putting away photographs of the plastic Barbie dolls that act in soap operas. I spend the rest of my time taking the photos out of the files and handing them to our editors. My official title is Associate Photo Editor. My own name for the job, a more appropriate one, I think, is Morgue Attendant.

Here's my request; could you lend me Cerebus for a few days? I'd like to have the shaggy little thug around here to do some much needed damage. I'd start him out on the files. If that works out, he could get to work on a few of the editors.

I couldn't afford to pay him much, but I'd be happy to buy him a few tankards of ale. And think of the job satisfaction!

Jerry Lazar
Daytime TV
355 Lexington Ave.
New York, New York 10017

We tried, Jerry. But we couldn't get him through customs without a cage. (And, needless to say, there wasn't much chance of getting him into one.)

As to Cerebus' lack of aggression . . . keep watching.

Dear Dave Sims

I've just received issue No. 34 and for the 34th time my mother asked me why I was chuckling out loud for.

For some reason Elrod never really caught my fancy as a character but after reading Moorcock's Elric and this issue my view has swung around 180. This guy is great and I appreciate his "witties" as much as he does.

Another old character was also introduced in the form of Bran Mak Mufin (Macmuffin?). This could really get Cerebus in trouble with the inquisition if Bran goes around saying Cerebus is the supreme deity, and all that.

Over all I think Cerebus is starting to take a back seat to all these other characters. Though this is not necessarily bad, at least for a short time, I feel a dominant Cerebus is more interesting. I'll save all my other questions until the story is over to see if they are answered.

I'm looking forward to seeing Lord Julius again and his reaction to Cerebus' political decisions concerning Palnu.

Do I see a Gene Day influence in the inking of the soaked Elrod?

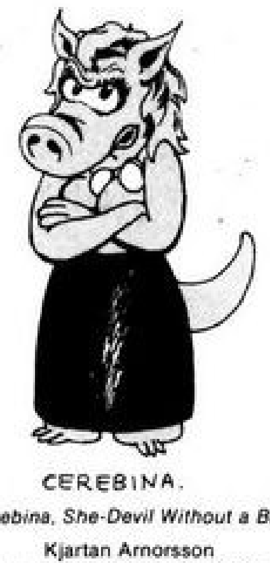
Darryl Burgwin
6728 Chisholm Ave.
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3L 2R9

The inquisition is on the ropes, actually. More on this in the next couple of issues.

Dear Dave and Deni

I just had to write. Too many questions cropping up that I need evaded:

1. What, I say what happened to our second favorite character? Considering that his rigor-mortified -- stiff that is -- body was last seen used as an offensive weapon? Mayhap an addendum to Swords No. 4?
2. You said, in response to an earlier letter -- I disremember when -- that Cerebus presently is more the type to sit in a tent at the top of a hill and watch the battle. Whatever happened to the killer-who-looks-like-a-bunny? I mean, the last real bit of gumption we've seen out of him was his handling of Dirty Fleagle and Dirty Drew (No. 27), who are not exactly the most competent warriors. *Then* he gets humiliated by the Moon Roach, has considerable trouble handling him at grips (Remember "Move your hands or lose them, cootie?"), and appears to be getting unduly civilized, overall. Sure, he disposed of Elrod in the last issue (No. 34), but we all know that Elrod would have difficulty fencing with Illusionists (oh wow, like, a sword). This is not particularly a stylistic complaint, nor even much of a complaint at all; I am just afraid that Cerebus might spend the next 266 issues in nothing but political intrigue and high society. True, as you commented, Cerebus is getting older; but he is only 27 now, as opposed to 26 in the killer-who-looks-like-a-bunny issue. He shouldn't be going all tame and helpless all of a sudden. Tell me it isn't so.
3. You've probably heard this eighteen times before, but lately the stories have been wonderful. One little thing though. You're giving me, and probably thousands more, an ulcer with these endings. Instead of reading an issue, chuckling a lot, and waiting patiently for the next, recently we've been left with endings so abruptly transitory that I, at least, sweat nonstop for the next



Cerebina, She-Devil Without a Bra

Kjartan Arnorsson
Hraunbraut 14, Kopavogi 200, ICELAND

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

month. Couldn't you maybe begin a new plot idea at the beginning of an issue and not at the end? You don't need to use artifice to get people such as me to buy the next issue; once a Cerebus fan is hooked, he's hooked. The last few issues have been nerve-wrecking.
4. I did enjoy the Unique Story printed in the back of No. 32-33. The only problem is that it pales somewhat in comparison with the body of the issues.
5. Anyway, total compliments on issue No. 34. Aside from the nerve-wrakingness of the last page, I love the plot complications introduced. I'd darnnear forgotten about the Pigts, as well as almost given up hope on Elrod. Keep up the superb work.

Michael Koenecke
M236 Jester Center Halls
Austin, Texas 78784

1. Don't -- I say -- don't look now son, but he's back.
2. See Cerebus' comments about the reaction to him in lest elsewhere in this issue. He had a hectic couple of years there; let's let him catch his breath while he can, hmm?
3. There's a lot of changes ahead for Cerebus before issue No. 50, but I promise that "High Society" does end there. (or within one or two issues, he said, hedging his bets).
4. This seems as good a point as any to request that comments regarding the Unique Stories include a "yes" or "no" on the question of whether you'd buy a complete comic book by the artist involved.
5. Thank you. I love letters with numbered question.

Dear Dave and Deni

Thank you for your reply to my letter, you really go out of your way for your fans. The magnitude of Dave's genius would have probably made CEREBUS a success even if he ignored the public in the classic Ditko tradition.

How much more would this comic cost if it were printed in colour? Is this something you have considered recently? Maybe you could publish CEREBUS in both black-and-white and colour? That way completists would end up having to purchase 3 (counting the eventual SWORDS reprint) copies of each story.

I can hardly wait until next month for the return, I say, the return of you-know-who. You're getting it all wrong, boy.

I recently used a drawing of a familiar-looking Aardvark in the newspaper ad for my shop. I hope you don't mind.

LONG LIVE THE AARDVARK!

Bill Hall
8923 North Seneca Street
Weedsport, New York 13166

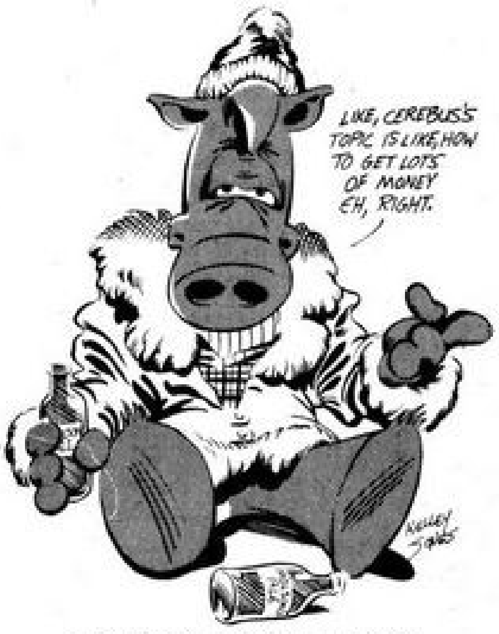
I have been considering lately that it might work to reprint more than four stories per volume, once Swords has reprinted the first twenty-four issues (Volume 6), making, then, numbers 1-25 (all the pre-High Society stories) available in a three-volume set. The stories would not be interrupted with introductions and there would be no new material included, except for a new cover painting. Colour might be a possibility, if we go to a mainstream publisher as the Pini's did. I'm not certain what kind of sales we could get for a colour Cerebus reprint, but we'd certainly be interested in hearing from all of you.

Dear Dave

Cerebus is great. Really quite exceptional. Good stuff. In fact, too good. I have a bad feeling about it. When does Bill Mantlo take over?

David Tompkins
272 Paranoid Street
West Nervous Sweat, Conn. 06119

Now is that nice? What did Bill Mantlo ever do to you?


LIKE, CEREBUS'S TOPIC IS LIKE, HOW TO GET LOTS OF MONEY EH, RIGHT.

CEREBUS'S GREAT WHITE NORTH

Good day. Our topic for today is "People who continue to do something even after, like, y'tell 'em not to." Ohay, like, doing cartoons like this one is only doing one thing. And that's, uh, making it look like certain countries are stupid. Which is, like, not fair at all. Cause, like what if somebody did that to you, right? And you shouldn't make fun of how any certain country, like, talks, eh? See, we were driving in a certain other country last month to, like Poughkeepsie, right? And when we parked in the street, we got a ticket. Which is really dumb, eh? But it shows you that, like, we have stuff we can make fun of, too, if you guys are going to be complete hosers. So, take off, eh?

Dear Deni

Funny the way things work out. In Swords No. 2 the artist fellow writes of his distributor's and later his own misgivings about Cerebus No. 5. Three years ago I started hearing things about this Cerebus. The thing that struck me most about it at the time was that there seemed to be an awful lot of them; then as now "alternative" comics tended to come out twice a year at most, STAR*REACH being the most frequent at quarterly. The CEREBUS I happened to pick up to sample it was No. 5. It didn't seem like such a much; the only thing that stood out was the misuse of the word "penultimate" ("the penultimate swordsman"), a pet peeve of mine. Somehow (maybe someone has told you this already) many people have gotten the idea that penultimate means "extremely ultimate". It means nothing of the sort. Penultimate is the one before the ultimate, i.e., nine is the penultimate number when counting from one to ten. Unless there was only going to be one swordsman after this Mak Muffin guy, "penultimate swordsman" doesn't mean much. Class dismissed. Anyway the upshot was that I didn't catch up with Cerebus again 'til early last year.

In the old continuity controversy, Dave was right in the first place. To hell with it, write the best story you have. There's been a slight tendency in the last dozen issues or so to eliminate ambiguities. I think it's a bad idea. Solutions are never as interesting as mysteries. "Mind Game 2" in particular told a little more about Cerebus than we really want to know. When you have an identification character as elemental as Cerebus, the reader (well, this reader) prefers to read in the characteristics he chooses. Letting on that Cerebus has had seven years of mystical training disappoints the readers who want to see him as a hard-headed realist. Anyway, the artist fellow's first instincts are usually the best. He should trust them.

If Aardvark-Vanaheim ever becomes an empire, how about getting another book for Dean Motter to edit? Andromeda had a Canadian comics rennaissance in the works when it folded. There seems to be something special going on in your country in comics; it needs a showcase. Failing that, how about getting Tom Nesbitt into your back pages? Does Cerebus take up every bit of the artist fellow's working day? (that is, might he be doing other things in the future?) Wouldn't it be nice if I quit asking questions?

R. Fiore
c/o Comics Journal

I'm trying to find some time for outside projects, but Cerebus does take up three minutes out of every five, I guess. Thanks to R. Fiore for our penultimate letter of the month.

Dear Dave

As a long-standing, but long silent, Cerebus fan, I just want to say that Cerebus No. 33 was one of the most fascinating issues I've read. It brought to light some of the big changes our hero has gone through, or actually, the changes that have been going on around him. Time was, the "killer-who-looked-like-a-bunny" would pull out his sword and slice, dice, and make julliene fries out of any problem that presented itself. Now, he finds himself tangled up with a collection of priests, merchants, financiers, and politicians, at the mercy of a Machiavellian lady lobbyest and a psychologically unstable moon-dropper. The poor little guy! Barbarians, especially of the earth-pig variety, are becoming obsolete; and there isn't a thing he can do about it.

Serious, deep, insightful character analysis aside, I think I'm beginning to fall in love with Astoria. The lady is absolutely perfect! She's managed to adapt the same killer instincts that made Cerebus such a successful barbarian to the emerging bureaucracy. She's the only worthy opponent Cerebus has had for a long time, and, to my knowledge, the only sane one. I hope she'll be around for a long time.

Speaking of being around for a long time, I hope that "Unique Stories" will become a regular feature. Heck, I wish it could have been possible for it to become it's own book. It was not fated to be, I suppose, but I hope that Aardvark-Vanaheim can continue to provide high-quality, avant-garde comics work. After all, you have a highly selective audience, one which can appreciate good, off-beat, stories and art.

Hope to be with you for the next 267 issues.

Francis Herman
2001 Main St.
Buffalo, New York 14208

Our intention with the back pages "UNIQUE STORIES" feature is to better prepare ourselves for the large job of publishing new talent. The barbarian isn't verging on extinction in Estarcian, but they are rare as hen's teeth in the more affluent parts of the major cities.

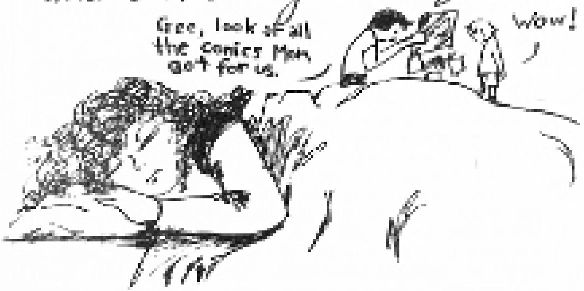
FANTACON '81

Third in a series of four photo's by William C. Johnson of Dave, Deni, and friends at FANTACON in Albany, N.Y., September 18-19, 1981

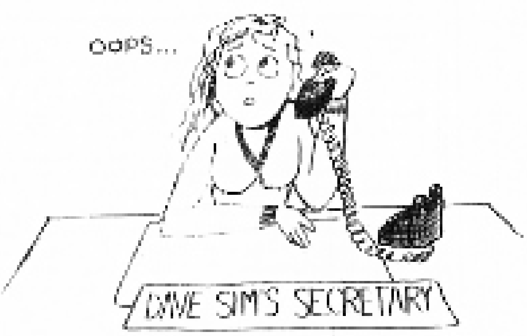
Me and Deni without friends (let me rephrase that).

Dear Dave, re:- Single Page

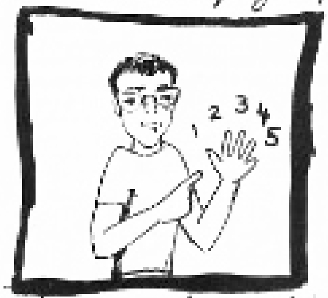
Thank you for the copies of Cerebus bi-weekly which arrived in the mail Monday morning.


Gee, look at all the comics Mom got for us.
Wow!

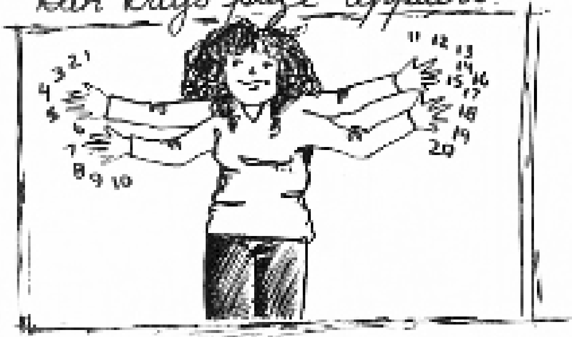
It was very kind of you to send them.


OOPS...
DAVE SIM'S SECRETARY

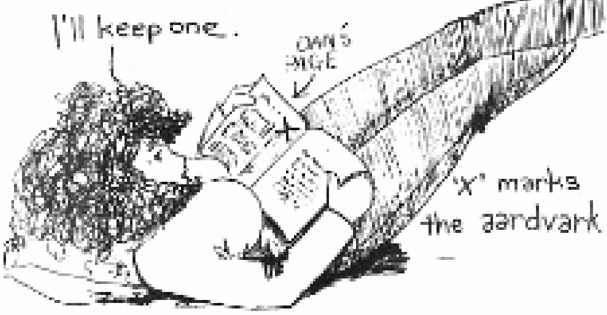
However, Eddie Campbell was somewhat dismayed that he had received only five copies of the issue in which his page appears



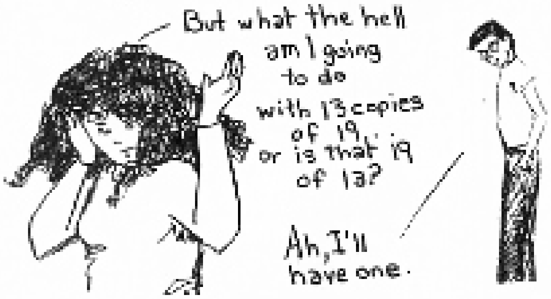
whereas I have received twenty copies of the issue in which Dan Day's page appears.


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

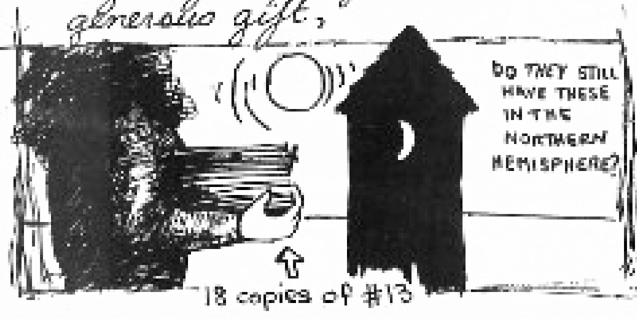
I really enjoyed reading Dan's page, and of course, Cerebus.


I'll keep one.
DAN'S PAGE
'X' marks the aardvark

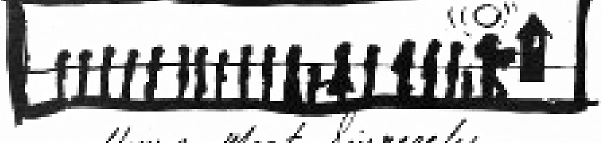
I'm sure I can think of lots of things to do with so many copies of Cerebus bi-weekly #13.


But what the hell am I going to do with 13 copies of 19, or is that 19 of 13?
Ah, I'll have one.

I don't wish to seem ungrateful for your most generous gift,


DO THEY STILL HAVE THESE IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE?
18 copies of #13

but can I expect to receive copies of the issue that my page appears in?



Yours Most Sincerely —

April

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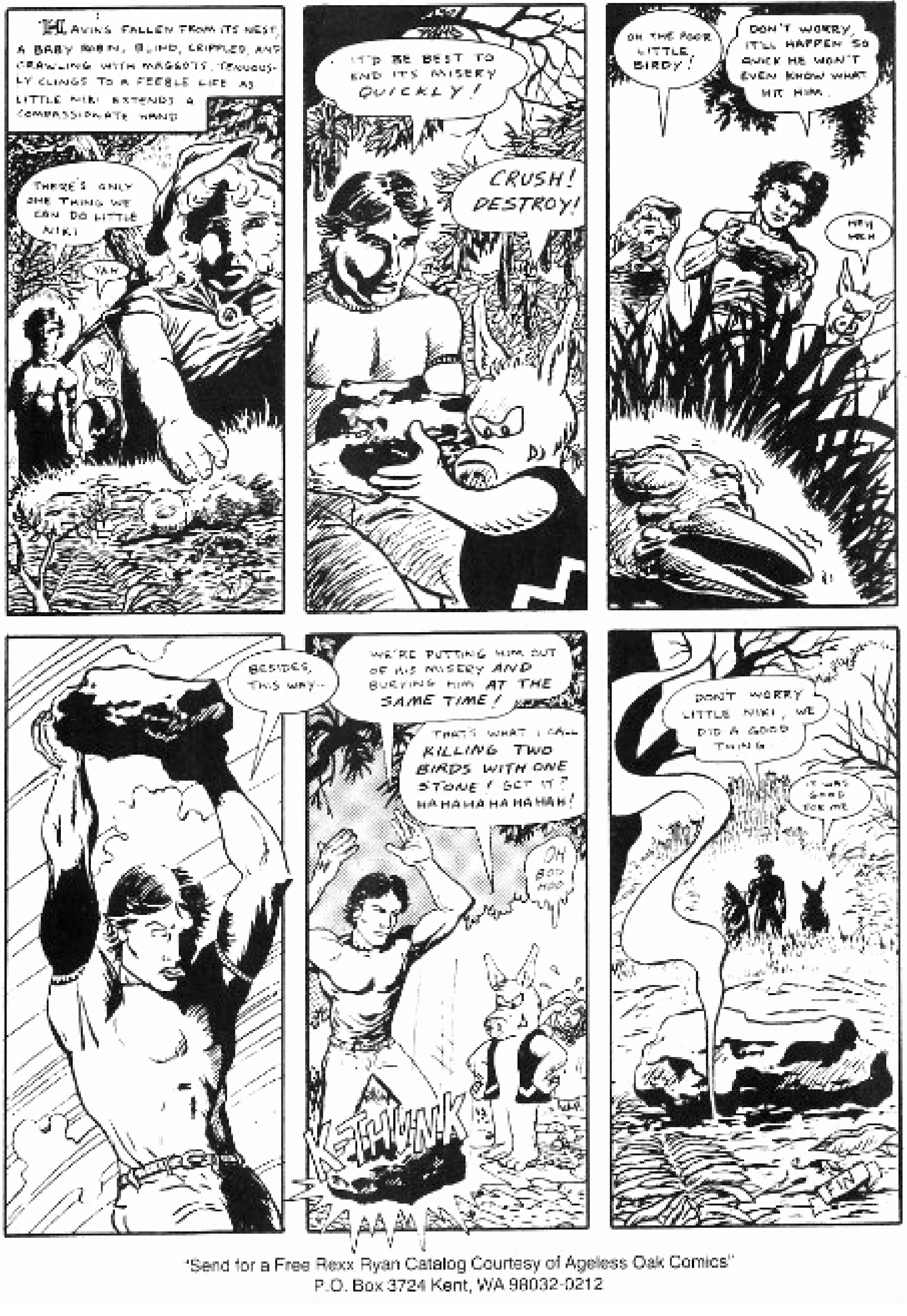
BIRTH OF AN IDIOM

A
REXX RYAN
SHORT STORY

by Bryan Robles '89


HAVING FALLEN FROM ITS NEST, A BABY ROBIN, BLIND, CRIPPLED, AND CRAWLING WITH MAGGOTS, TENUOUSLY CLINGS TO A FEEBLE LIFE AS LITTLE NIKI EXTENDS A COMPASSIONATE HAND
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING WE CAN DO LITTLE NIKI
YAH
IT'D BE BEST TO END ITS MISERY QUICKLY!
CRUSH! DESTROY!
OH THE POOR LITTLE BIRDY!
DON'T WORRY, IT'LL HAPPEN SO QUICK HE WON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT HIT HIM.
HEH HEH
BESIDES, THIS WAY--
WE'RE PUTTING HIM OUT OF HIS MISERY AND BURYING HIM AT THE SAME TIME!
THAT'S WHAT I CALL KILLING TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE! GOT IT? HAHAHAHAHAHAHAH!
OH BOO HOO
KATHUNK
BLAAAM
DON'T WORRY LITTLE NIKI, WE DID A GOOD THING
IT WAS GOOD FOR ME

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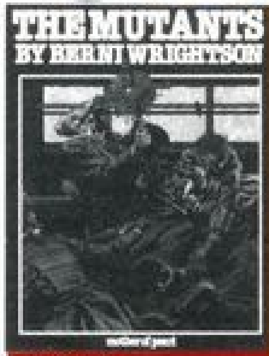


The Mutants
by Berni Wrightson -- "Mother Toad," "Conjure Woman," and many more stories from early in Berni's career. Was $9.95 **$6.95**

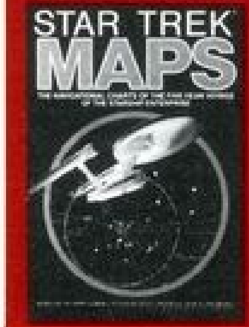
Mediascene Prevue
Back issue bargains: 30: SF Special, Empire Strikes Back. 32: Drawing for Comics, Conan. 35: Alien, Star Wars Comics. 36: Bil Stout's Buck Rogers art, Martian Chronicles, Moonraker. Were $1.75 each: **75¢**

Hot Stuf 6
"Winter of '94" by Tim Boxell & Rich Larsen; Mike Nassar; great Larsen/Fastner cover on this sf comic. Was $2 **75¢**

Star Fleet
Medical Reference Manual
Vulcan physiology, anatomical drawings of alien life forms, space plants & parasites . . . 160 pages. Was $6.95 **$2.95**

The Sunday Funnies
A thick 11 × 15 box with exact replicas of over 50 classic strips. Full color, they fold out to 11 × 17! Prince Valiant, Superman, Buck Rogers, Little Nemo, Pogo, etc. Was $12.50 **$4.95**

Dan O'Neill Pack
Two thick softcovers collect all the early Odd Bodkins strips. Dan's zany humor is in abundance here. Meet Fred, Norton the Motorcycle, and Magic Cookie Land. From the original Air Pirate who fought Disney for the right to satire! A $9.90 value. **$5.00**



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A spectacular package with 4 huge, full color maps and a 32-page "official technical" book. Was $8.95 **$3.50**

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We've got an overstock of this particular issue. If you haven't yet dived into this incredible graphic novel, try this at a super deal. Sword & sorcery, battle in outer space, sensitive romance in alien worlds! A $1 value. **50¢**

Magic Carpet #1
The very first "Voltar" story by Alfredo Alcala. "All Alcala" issue. Was $1.25 **50¢**
#2 --Brent Anderson and other artists provide great sf stories. Was $1 **50¢**

Metal Hurlant #15
The original French magazine that spawned Heavy Metal. Great work by Moebius and others. Was $2.50 **$1.50**

Variable Syndrome
by Don McGregor --Don's sf novel about a bizarre future-world. Plus a look at Marshall Rogers and the making of Detectives Inc. Was $10 **$4.95**

Fandom Directory '81
Find fellow collectors with this book of 8100 fans & their interests. Plus many, many articles, fanzine & dealer directories, and 30 pages of art. 380 pages. Was $6.95 **$4.95**

The PHANTOM

The Nostalgia Phantom: Prisoner of the Himalayas
Nailed into a box, dropped into a lake, chasing killers on icy slopes . . . The Ghost Who Walks in his greatest adventure. Was $5.95 **$3.95**

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The X-Men, Ghost Rider, & Iron Fist co-star in Spidey's greatest team-ups. Gil Kane & Romita art. Huge 10 × 13 book. Was $2.00 **$1.25**

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All six of the Marvel Comics appear here in one 10 × 13 magazine, in full color. Was $2.50 **$1.50**

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Special Edition
Walt Simonson & Klaus Janson provide a great adaption of this incredible film. Was $1.50 Just **50¢**

Andromeda #5
The best of "Alternative Comics" ever published! "The Big Hunger" by Walter Miller & Tony Meers is the ultimate story of space conquest. Was $1.25 **60¢**

MYSTERIES IN SPACE

Mysteries in Space
From Infantino to Frazetta, here are the very best sf stories from DC's long-running comic. And guest stars include Adam Strange, Capt. Comet, Space Ranger, Manhunter from Mars, and the Justice League. Was $7.95 **$3.95**

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The #1 magazine about science fiction in films and on TV. Compare these prices with the back issue prices in any Starlog issue and you'll be amazed. Super discounts! #10: George Pal & Ray Harryhausen; SPACE 1999. #12: The making of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS; Doug Trumbull (STAR WARS) reveals special effects secrets; STAR TREK's Gene Roddenberry is interviewed. #13: LOGAN's RUN episode guide; THE TIME MACHINE; great Disney outer space films. #18: Gary Kurtz (STAR WARS) interview; GALACTICA inside look; Hollywood monster makeup. #19: STAR WARS TV Cantina Reunion; BATTLESTAR GALACTICA; Roger Corman interview; BODY SNATCHERS. #20: MORK & MINDY interview; SUPERMAN. #22: Special Effects Part One; Don Maitz.
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SQUA TRONT 8

Squa Tront
The original EC Comics fanzine, packed with interviews, articles, and unpublished art by Wally Wood, Jack Davis, Ingles, Al Williamson & others. #7 was $4, #8 was $3 each: **$1.50**

Chacal #2
Robert E. Howard fiction and articles highlight this top-quality magazine. Art by Steranko and Steve Fabian. Was $3.50 **$2.50**

REH:
Lone Star Fictioneer #4
Jim Steranko illustrates Howard's "Three Bladed Doom." Plus Frazetta, Redondo, John Severin. Was $3.50 **$2.50**

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AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

37
APR

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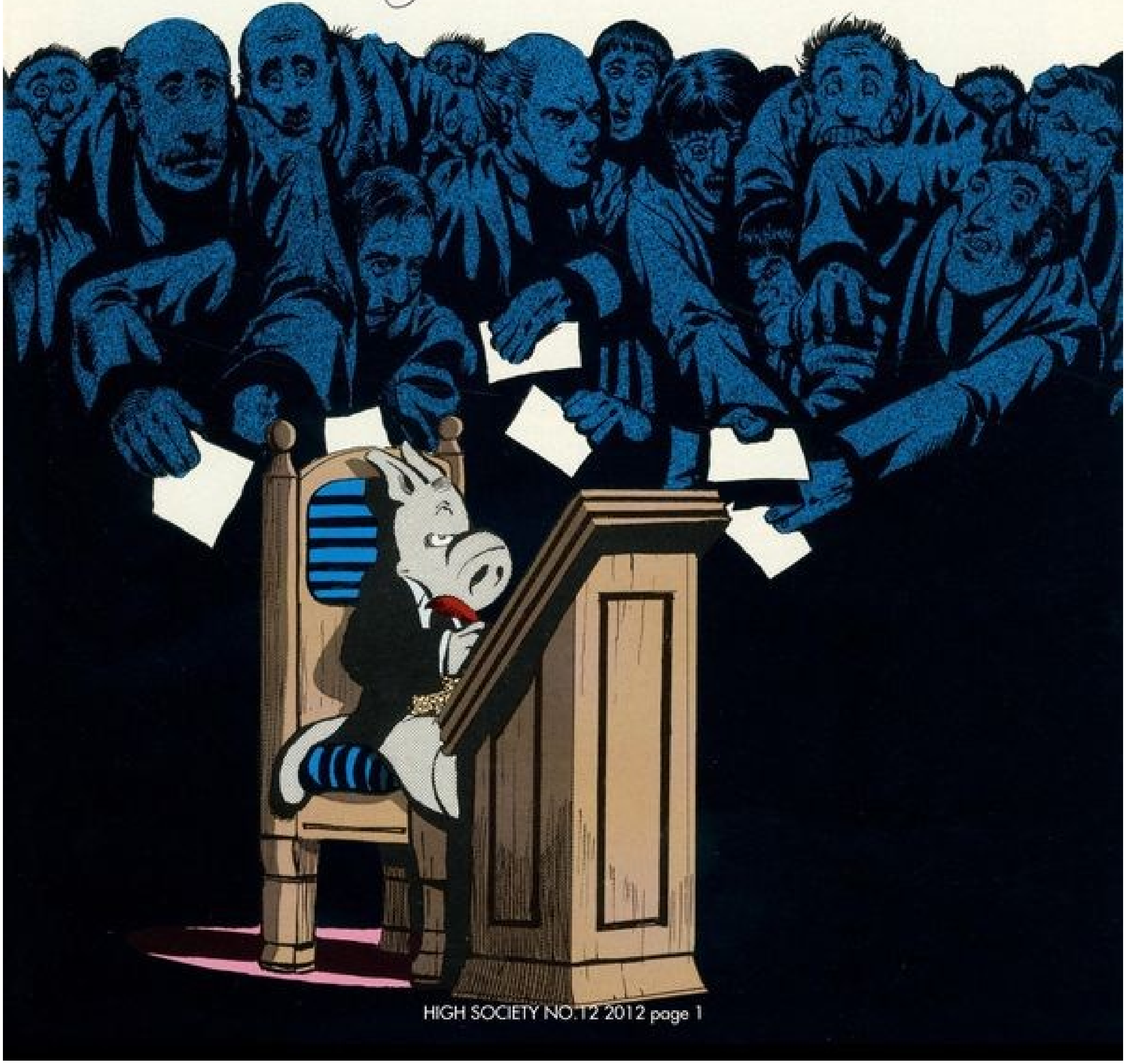


Photo by William C. Johnson

A Note from the Publisher

Not long ago we had printed a letter from a fan in England, concerning some lead figures that Citadel was putting out that looked remarkably like Cerebus. The letter was printed more as a way of venting our anger at this sort of thing than anything else (suing someone in a foreign country is not cheap). So you can imagine our surprise (and delight) when we received a letter in the mail from Rock Bottom Books and Comics. It went like this:

"We here at Rock Bottom have discovered a nice little lead figure of a small burrowing, ant-eating African mammal. Complete with sword and three-disc medallion. Remind you of someone?

This 25 mm figure (by Citadel) is such a look-alike that it seems there is no doubt about it's personality. At least, there is no doubt in our minds who it is. It's Cerebus!!

Anyway, to get to the nitty-gritty and cut the B. S. We've always had a soft-spot for poor, honest, down-on-their-luck artist types. Especially those that are oppressed, put-down, and ripped-off by large, unfeeling companies, and we (that is I, myself, and others) are sick and tired of it! We are sending you a royalty of one whole quarter (25 cents) for each Cerebus figure sold, in hopes that it will calm your nerves, settle your stomach and line your pockets.

Here, enclosed in this envelope is your first cheque for 22 figures for **Tum** Ta-Ta-Daaa! $5.50. We know it's not much, but it makes us feel better about the whole thing and hope it sets an example."

What can I say? A **very big** thank-you to Kim and Glen at Rock Bottom in Columbia, MO. These are the kind of people that make all the hard work worthwhile. I'd sure be curious to know how many other specialty shops are handling these figures and also carry Cerebus.

In asking for a response to our new "Unique Stories" feature in the back of Cerebus -- something very interesting was revealed. It seems that some people are under the impression that Cerebus is shorter because of Unique Stories. On the contrary, Cerebus has remained at twenty pages of story for over two years now. What we did instead, was add eight pages to the book itself. With the four pages of story and four pages of advertising, we are now able to pay artists with the revenues from the ads. This way, no Cerebus story gets cut and no-one has to pay more for the extra four pages of Unique Stories. The extra cost for actually printing another eight pages will continue to be absorbed by Aardvark-Vanaheim as long as our circulation continues to grow. (We are, as of this issue, at 15,000 circulation per month).

As for Unique Stories as it's own title - it just isn't feasible at this time. But from the response we've gotten so far, I have begun to talk to Bill Loebs about doing his own book. What do you think? Would you pay for twenty pages of Bill Loebs every two months? I figure, "What better audience for new and different material than the people who read Cerebus?"

Some people have been asking me what conventions we will be appearing at. So far we have only confirmed two conventions: **THE TORONTO CON, MAY 16TH,** at the Ramada Inn on Carleton Street (both Dave and I will be there) and Dave will be a guest at this year's **CHICAGO CON IN JULY.** I'm hoping to make it to San Diego this year, as last year was Dave's turn to be in sunny southern California. That would be at the end of July -- but I'm not sure yet of that convention. Don't you worry -- I'll let everyone know if either Dave or I (or even, god forbid, both of us!) go to San Diego this summer.

Before I go, a small aside to Matt Denn concerning your request. . . . . the answer is yes. Simple?

Since the hockey season is now finished (with the Toronto Maple Leafs not even in the play-offs, the season ended early for Dave and I) I'll probably write a **real** editorial next issue. (What was this one, a fake one?)

See you then!

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 37 APRIL 1982

Publisher
Deni Sim

Distributors:
Bud Plant Inc.
P.O. Box 1886
Grass Valley, CA
95945

Pacific Comics
P.O. Box 99217
San Diego, CA
92109

Glenwood Distribution
124 Vandalia St.
Collinsville, IL
62234

Capital City Distributors
2827 Perry Street
Madison, Wisconsin
53713

Styx Comic Service
Box 3791, Stn. B.
Winnipeg, Man., Canada
R2W 3R6

Now & Then Books
103 Queen St. South
Kitchener, Ont.
N2G 1W1

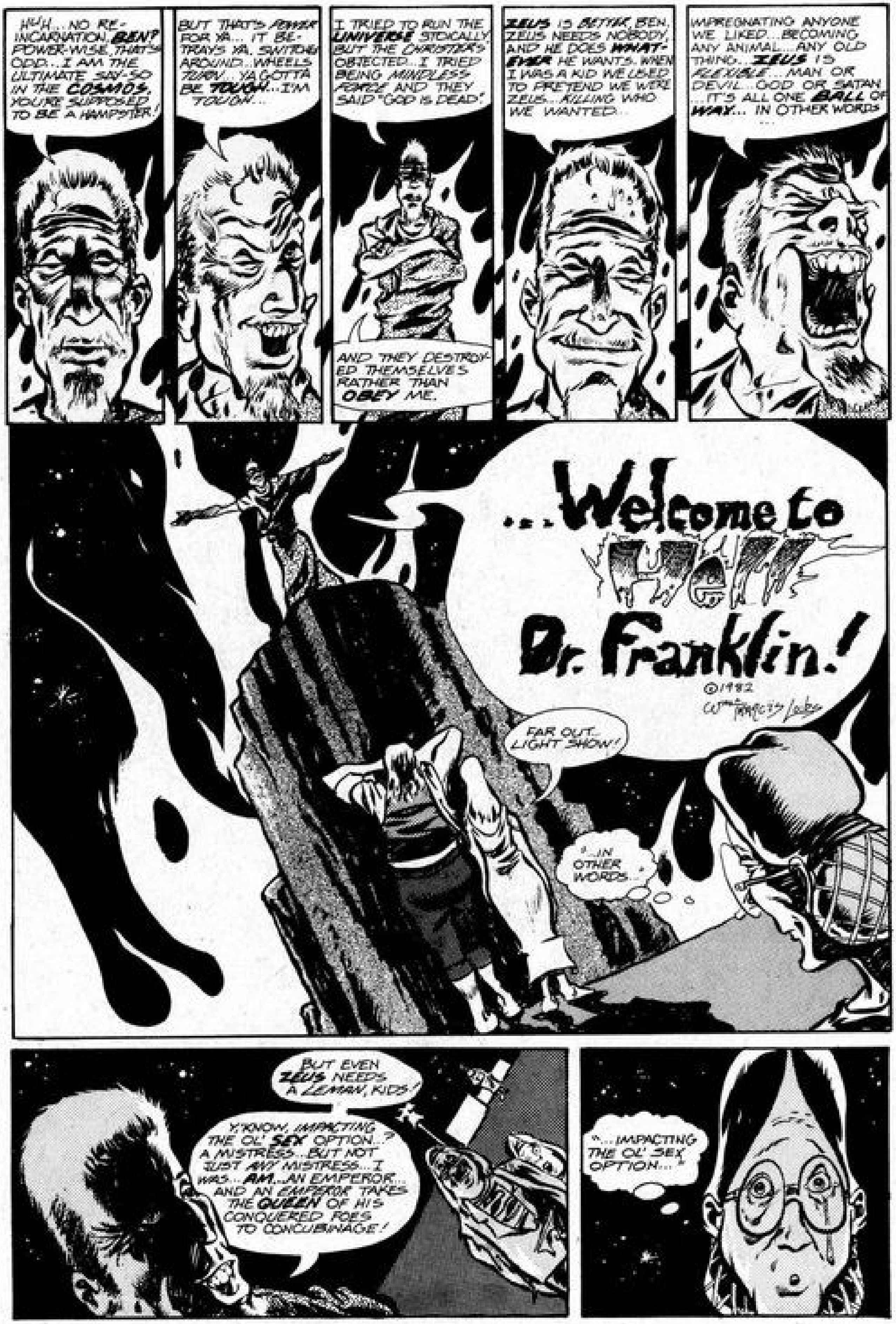
Silver Snail
323 Queen St. W.
Toronto, Ontario

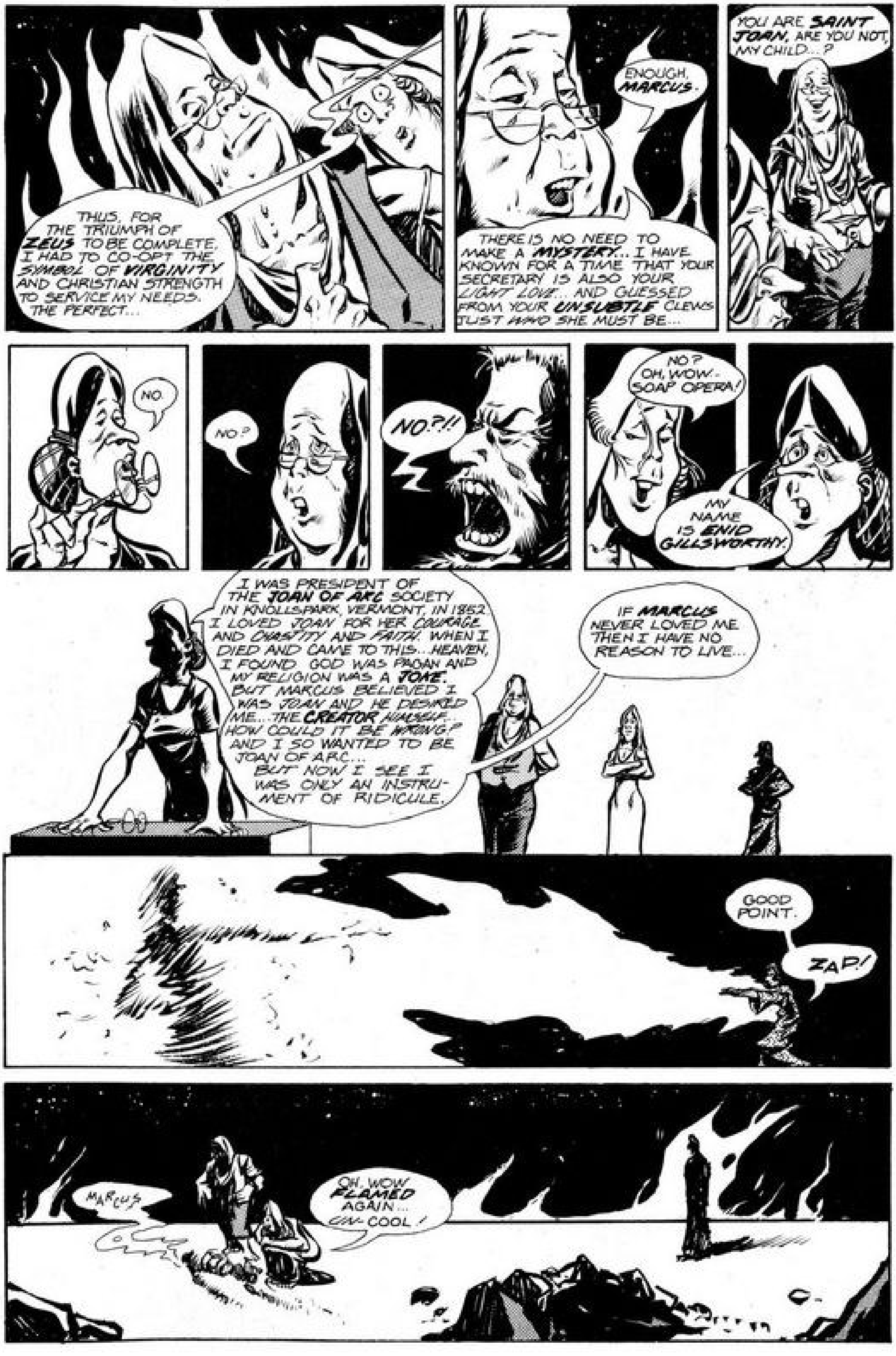
Titan Distributors
P.O. Box 250
London, E3 4RT
England

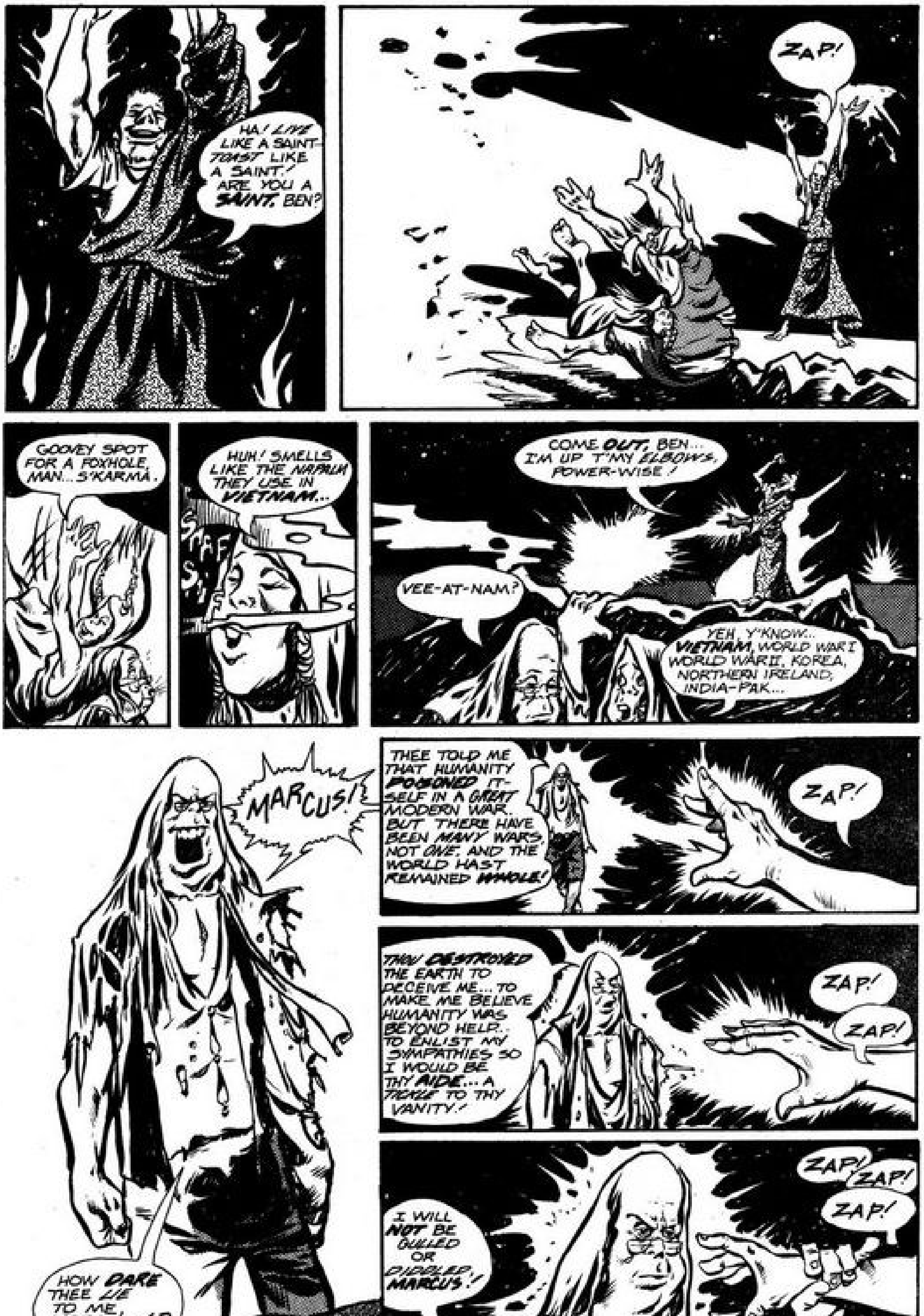
Cerebus Fan Club
c/o Fred Patten
11863 West Jefferson Blvd.
Culver City, California
90230
Membership ..... $8.00 per year

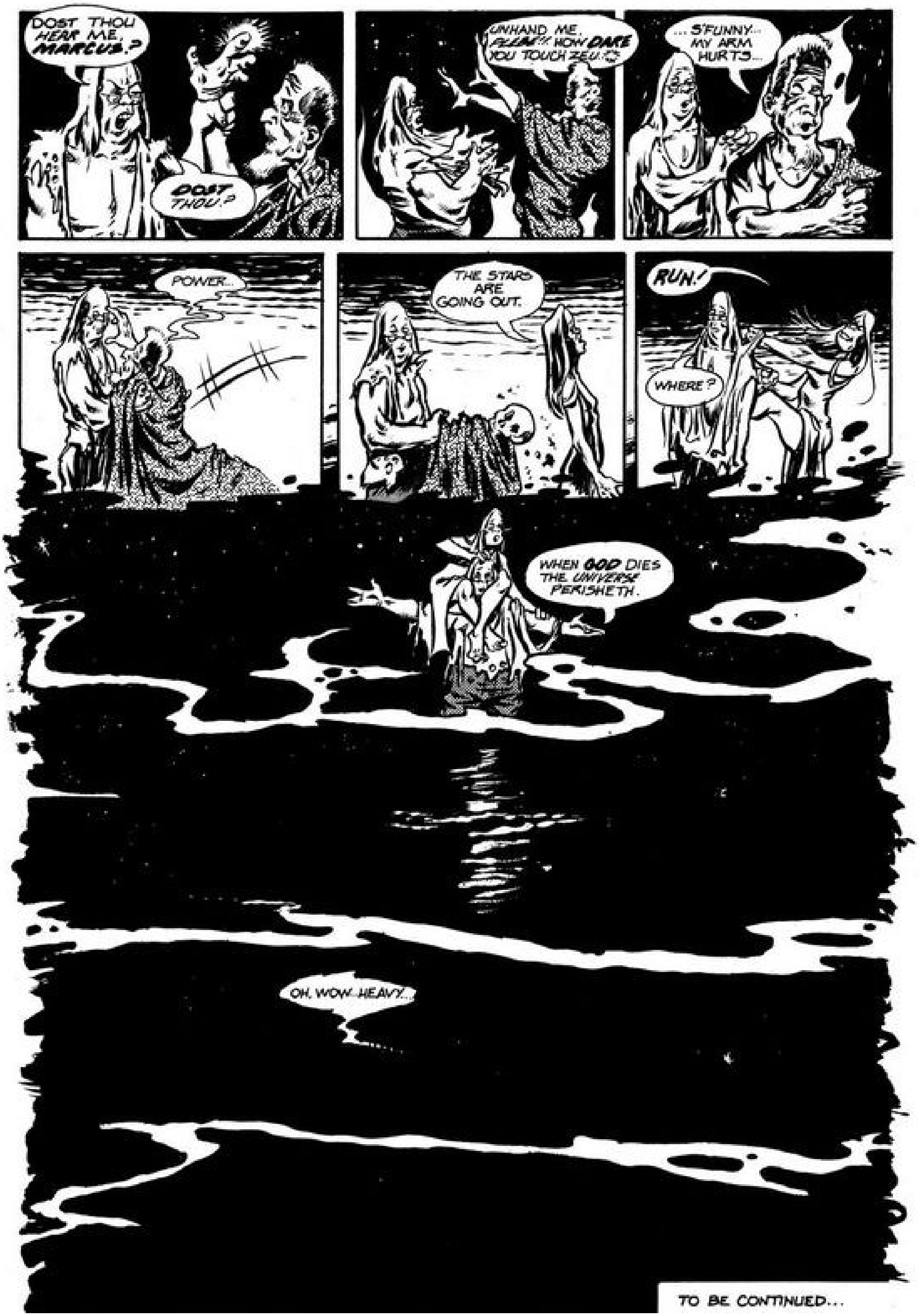
Advertising (design)
Abraxas Studio
Richard Bruning
P.O. Box 1606
Madison, Wisconsin
53701

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published fifteen times a year by Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc., P.O. Box 1674 Station 'C', Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2, including three "Swords of Cerebus" in winter, spring and fall. All contents © 1982 Dave Sim. Any inquiries regarding use of the characters, images, or situations depicted should be addressed to Deni Sim. No unauthorized reproduction allowed except for review or other Journalistic purpose. Advertising rates furnished on request. Printed in Canada by Preney Print and Litho Inc., Windsor, Ontario.


HUH... NO RE-INCARNATION, BEN? POWER-WISE, THAT'S ODD... I AM THE ULTIMATE SAY-SO IN THE COSMOS. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A HAMPSTER!
BUT THAT'S POWER FOR YA... IT BE-TRAYS YA. SWITCHES AROUND... WHEELS TURN... YA GOTTA BE TOUGH... I'M TOUGH...
I TRIED TO RUN THE UNIVERSE STOICALLY BUT THE CHRISTERS OBJECTED... I TRIED BEING MINDLESS FORCE AND THEY SAID "GOD IS DEAD".
AND THEY DESTROYED THEMSELVES RATHER THAN OBEY ME.
ZEUS IS BETTER, BEN. ZEUS NEEDS NOBODY, AND HE DOES WHATEVER HE WANTS. WHEN I WAS A KID WE USED TO PRETEND WE WERE ZEUS... KILLING WHO WE WANTED...
IMPREGNATING ANYONE WE LIKED... BECOMING ANY ANIMAL... ANY OLD THING... ZEUS IS FLEXIBLE... MAN OR DEVIL... GOD OR SATAN... IT'S ALL ONE BALL OF WAX... IN OTHER WORDS ...
...Welcome to HELL Dr. Franklin!
©1982 Wm Francis Loebs
FAR OUT... LIGHT SHOW!
"...IN OTHER WORDS..."
BUT EVEN ZEUS NEEDS A LEMAN, KIDS!
Y'KNOW, IMPACTING THE OL' SEX OPTION...? A MISTRESS... BUT NOT JUST ANY MISTRESS... I WAS... AM... AN EMPEROR... AND AN EMPEROR TAKES THE QUEEN OF HIS CONQUERED FOES TO CONCUBINAGE!
"...IMPACTING THE OL' SEX OPTION..."


THUS, FOR THE TRIUMPH OF ZEUS TO BE COMPLETE, I HAD TO CO-OPT THE SYMBOL OF VIRGINITY AND CHRISTIAN STRENGTH TO SERVICE MY NEEDS. THE PERFECT...
ENOUGH, MARCUS.
THERE IS NO NEED TO MAKE A MYSTERY... I HAVE KNOWN FOR A TIME THAT YOUR SECRETARY IS ALSO YOUR LIGHT LOVE... AND GUESSED FROM YOUR UNSUBTLE CLEWS JUST WHO SHE MUST BE...
YOU ARE SAINT JOAN, ARE YOU NOT, MY CHILD...?
NO.
NO?
NO?!!
NO? OH, WOW.. SOAP OPERA!
MY NAME IS ENID GILLSWORTHY.
I WAS PRESIDENT OF THE JOAN OF ARC SOCIETY IN KNOLLSPARK, VERMONT, IN 1852. I LOVED JOAN FOR HER COURAGE AND CHASTITY AND FAITH. WHEN I DIED AND CAME TO THIS... HEAVEN, I FOUND GOD WAS PAGAN AND MY RELIGION WAS A JOKE. BUT MARCUS BELIEVED I WAS JOAN AND HE DESIRED ME... THE CREATOR HIMSELF... HOW COULD IT BE WRONG?! AND I SO WANTED TO BE JOAN OF ARC... BUT NOW I SEE I WAS ONLY AN INSTRUMENT OF RIDICULE.
IF MARCUS NEVER LOVED ME, THEN I HAVE NO REASON TO LIVE...
GOOD POINT.
ZAP!
MARCUS
OH, WOW. FLAMED AGAIN... UN-COOL!


HA! LIVE LIKE A SAINT-TOAST LIKE A SAINT! ARE YOU A SAINT, BEN?
ZAP!
GOOVEY SPOT FOR A FOXHOLE, MAN...S'KARMA.
HUH! SMELLS LIKE THE NAPALM THEY USE IN VIETNAM...
SNAFF
COME OUT, BEN... I'M UP T'MY ELBOWS, POWER-WISE!
VEE-AT-NAM?
YEH, Y'KNOW... VIETNAM, WORLD WAR I WORLD WAR II, KOREA, NORTHERN IRELAND, INDIA-PAK...
MARCUS!
THEE TOLD ME THAT HUMANITY POISONED IT-SELF IN A GREAT MODERN WAR. BUT THERE HAVE BEEN MANY WARS, NOT ONE, AND THE WORLD HAST REMAINED WHOLE!
ZAP!
THOU DESTROYED THE EARTH TO DECEIVE ME... TO MAKE ME BELIEVE HUMANITY WAS BEYOND HELP... TO ENLIST MY SYMPATHIES SO I WOULD BE THY AIDE... A TICKLE TO THY VANITY!
ZAP!
ZAP!
I WILL NOT BE GULLED OR DIDDLED, MARCUS!
ZAP!
ZAP!
ZAP!
HOW DARE THEE LIE TO ME, MARCUS!?


DOST THOU HEAR ME, MARCUS?
DOST THOU?
UNHAND ME, PEON!! HOW DARE YOU TOUCH ZEUS?!
...S'FUNNY... MY ARM HURTS...
POWER...
THE STARS ARE GOING OUT.
RUN!
WHERE?
WHEN GOD DIES THE UNIVERSE PERISHETH.
OH, WOW...HEAVY...
TO BE CONTINUED...

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Jeezus Crist, Dave -

I just got the stats from the first half of # 36 to do the ad . . . . You bring back Jaka, and Cerebus breaks her heart . . . . if I was some wimpy fan, I'd weep. "snif"

Richard Bruning
P. O. Box 1606
Madison, Wisconsin

This is my first reaction to # 36, from our advertising director, Wimpy. If I broke your heart, I'd love to hear from you. Just write "You broke my heart" c/o this comic book. Female letters will be given preference, (of course).

Dave

Thanks for the aardvark. This must be the only comic book I continue to enjoy and I think you maintain a fine standard. Maybe he shouldn't be, but after Cerebus himself, Elrod remains my favorite character. I think the drawing and general quality of the book is far higher than any other I've seen and I hope that you manage to maintain it. The character of Cerebus himself is a masterly conception! Thanks again. Very best wishes.

Michael Moorcock
somewhere in England

I've been thinking of printing a T-shirt for myself that says "I exploit albinos". If I ever do it, I'll be sure to send you one, too. Nice intimate little clique, you know?

Dear Dave and Deni

The final exchange between Astoria and Cerebus in # 33 was worthy of Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin. In fact, though the parallel is not a close one, that about sums up the realtionship of the economist and the aardvark these past few issues: a mysterious planner and slightly bufuddled but worldly-wise legman.

At any rate, the transition between issues # 33 and # 34 was an especially graceful one. When/if the two end up together in a future **Swords of Cerebus** volume, I hope that you'll forgo the usual short intro and let one flow into the next.

It seems to be old home week in Palnu, what with Elrod, the Cockroach and MacMuffin all prowling the streets. Cerebus' jumpiness is becoming increasingly understandable. It's bad enough running into one of those crazies at a time, but taking them on en masse is ridiculous. Having to deal with Astoria, the elf, and the inquisition can't be helping matters much either. It seems that urban stress doesn't agree with Cerebus, which I assume is the point of the current storyline.

As usual, Dave, your art is consistantly enjoyable. I'm especially impressed with the variety and quality of city backdrops. Iest is rapidly taking on the feel of a "real" city, like Duckburg or (Eisner's) Central City. The only significant complaint is about the increasing reliance on all-black backgrounds for interior scenes. (Is there some horrible energy crisis in the Regency?) I much preferred the array of penstrokes that filled the dead space in previous issues.

At the risk of making you even more "damned mad", I'll add my voice to the complaints about the new material in the SWORDS books. Though I can't say I've been with you from the first, the reprints have just caught up with my earliest issues. It does seem a little unfair to penalise longstanding fans by including essential new material in the compilations. How about the second reprint book to re-print the non-reprints from the first reprint book? (Whew!) Of course, it will be a while before enough accumulates to make such a project reasonable, but the basic idea seems feasable. You could include the Cerebus stuff that appeared outside the regular comic, such as the **TBG** pages.

Pierce Askegren
Sterling, Virginia

Thanks to Pierce and everyone else who wrote in with the ranking diplomatic resolution to the "new material in Swords" debate. Somewhere up ahead, we'll issue a Cerebus-sized comic with all of the Swords material not elsewhere available. After intensive study and a great deal of thought (and to make this answer look longer) I've decided it will come out around issue # 50. Bug your comic shop about it until then.

On the subject of "reprint transition", all of "High Society" will be reprinted under one introduction. I am even toying with the idea of adding a few transition pages to the reprint volume (ie: Cerebus walking back to the hotel as the sun comes up between # 36 and this issue, which was edited out due to space limitations).

Now, who wants a book that reprints all the transition pages? A portfolio of **Swords** *covers.*

Dear Dave and Deni

I've only been reading **Cerebus** for four issues, despite the fact that I've been reading comics for seven years and have been having **Cerebus** recommended to me for the past two years. When I saw ads containing Moon Roach, I figured I'd finally try it out, and I could curse myself for not buying the Earth-pig's adventures earlier.

He's great! I'm hooked! It's increadably refreshing to see comics that are not only created with incredible skill but which are geared to fans in satire, parody, and illusion. Each ish is a volume of relevance and importance. And the stylized art creates so much mood that often the humour that would be nigh

CEREBUS ORIGINAL ART

I am now offering pages of Cerebus for sale at $100.00 per page. Payment is in U.S. currency for rich Americans, $110.00 Canadian per page for victims of Allan MacEachen's budget. I have issue 30 to the present, complete. I am not selling certain pages (all of # 36, for example). I want to sell a few pages a month, so if they start moving too fast, the price goes up. The pages will be mailed to you after I draw each issue (generally the first of the month). . . . or allow four weeks for delivery if you want to get formal about it. Certified cheques or money orders only, payable to Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc. at the address above. Please list as many alternatives as you can. Sorry, I don't have time to send out lists of whats sold and what isn't. There is no discount for quantity, so please don't ask.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

undetectable when illustrated by anyone else is made riotous in such a way that you've just got to run out and show it to somebody.

As I read more and more of Cerebus, I want to know more and more about him; he is one of the most appealing characters in comics today. I'd like to thank you for SWORDS OF CEREBUS, hence making the history of his whole world available to everyone. I don't understand why older CEREBUS readers are so upset at having to pay alot for stuff they already have just to get a new story; I should think that all completists would want these well-packaged volumes even sans the new stuff!

As for the folks who still say that mainstream comics suck, they can go take a long walk on a short pier; that may have been a valid statement a couple of years ago, when Marvel was being indecisive as to whether it should try to regain the lost style of it's past or move ahead into new space, but over the past couple of years, even up to four or five years ago, the titles one by one turned into new and fascinating series. Sure, they're different from a Lee/Ditko **Spider-Man**, but the past cannot be dwelled upon -- things must move forward. Look at Miller's **Daredevil, Moon Knight,** the refurbished **Spider-Man,** Byrne's **Fantastic Four, The X-Man,** or **Doctor Strange,** and see of you can still truthfully say that you think mainstream comics suck. As for the barbaric methods of the publishers, they are almost all disappearing. The new incentive payments plan, the specialized titles, and direct-only books are evidence to that.

Heck, I think I picked a darn good time to get into comics, and I'd like to thank you both for making my fannish existence that much more enjoyable with **Cerebus.**

H. Scott Jones
910 North Avenue
Zephyrhills, Florida 33599

About the only issue I would take with your comments re: mainstream comics is on the subject of "barbaric methods". I side with the judgement that returned the rights to **L'il Abner** *to Al Capp, essentially because Capp felt his strip was not being promoted or handled correctly. This attitude of the artist entrusting a publisher with his creations as long as they are handled in the most (mutually) profitable manner, I feel, would have to be the cornerstone of comics publishing theory if we are to believe that happy days are here again. It's certainly an interesting precedent, anyway.*

Thank you for your nice words about Cerebus.

Dear Dave and Deni

All right, I know what you're up to! You don't fool me for a minute! (More like four days). In issue #34, Lord Julius is going to come to lest to find out what his ranking diplomatic representative is up to (raising tariffs and all); he'll get into an argument with Elrod, while Cerebus is hiding in a cupboard (to get away from the elf as much as Elrod or Lord Julius); When they find out where Cerebus is, they go storming into his room, the elf will attack them, and they'll be in the cupboard too -- leading to the much-heralded issue 35, first discussed in Swords of Cerebus Vol. 1! (Can I have a job plotting Cerebus?)

When is the elf making her guest appearance in **Elfquest**? Or even getting a name? And whatever happened to that Elfguest story?

It's nice to be part of popular opinion (re Diamondback). How much is the fan-club for over-seas readers?

What's all this about Cerebus closing down? Why March, 2005? You just don't have any faith in yourself, boy.

If there is another Cerebus portfolio, will it have other characters in as well? Heeheehee.

Peter Murray
168 Crofton Lane
Orpington, Kent England

1) No
2) You'll have to ask Richard or Wendy, but my guess is never.
3) That **is** *her name -- The Regency Elf. Call her "the" for short.*
4) I'm waiting for the right place and right time.
5) Overseas rates for the fan club are $10.00 per year.
6) All good things come to an end.
7) Why not?
8) Yes. Heeheehee
on second thought, don't bother numbering the questions, I'll just number the answers.

Dear Dave and Deni

I have been collecting Cerebus since # 17 and I love it. You are the best artist in the world!!! If you keep putting out these comic books you have a true follower!!!!!

P. S. Did you know that # 1 is going for $110.00, believe me, you're popular.

Clive Henrick
3177 Manchester C. T.
Palo Alto, Ca 94303

Why? I didn't go for $110.00

Dear Dave, Deni and Cerebus

It's me again. Hi there! Here I am writing you another letter. I decided I didn't like the first one, though thank you for publishing it anyway, it made me real happy. I've decided that this time I'm not letting my admiration for the fantastic job you're doing get in my way and make me blab like a zealot (See that, bet you didn't think Cerebus fans knew fancy words like "zealot". We're full of suprises). Anyway, this time I'm going to be very critical and inscrutable and nary a compliment do you get unless I absolutely can't help giving it away.

The last issue I read, owing to the vagaries (Don't ask me what it means; I just use 'em, I don't make 'em up.) of my comic seller's distributor, is issue #32, so I can't tell you I'm happy that he made up with the Elf, or outwitted the High Church, because I don't know if these things have come to pass. All I ask is that you bear with me, as I haven't seen a Cerebus for months now.

As for the last issue I did see, may I compliment you on your --- oops, silly question, of course I can't. On to the criticisms. If you have a fault, (in your stories, I mean, who am I to judge your private life?) it is that things are not always -- indeed, not ever -- as simple as they appear at first. Cerebus started out as a mercenary who was usually on top of things, and now he's a mercenary who's always at the bottom of things. The Cockroach started as a nut in a bug suit, and now he's a nut in a bug suit with a power hungry Pyramid person (at least that's what I think she is) controlling him. By the way, while we're talking about the Cootie, I really can't avoid complimenting you on him. You're the only person I know who can bring a character back in a third incarnation as a parody of a take-off of the character he was originally parodying. Now that's class, man.

But I digress. The fact is that Cerebus is right now involved in a deadly game of international intrigue and backstabbing and nastiness, or was the last time I checked, and while I like it and follow the story with tremendous interest, I think you'd lose out on the quality of your mag if every story that you did was like that. So in future, try throwing in the occasional run-in-and-kill-the-bad-guys story like issue # 1, or a story within a sequence, like issue # 16. In the meantime, keep up the long involved stories; the're good in their way.

But if I could, I'd like to request a few things. One, are you left-handed? Please tell me. And if you're not, why did you have one right-handed fighter in the entire saga? That's not something a right-hander does for no reason at all.

Two, you said something, I believe, about bringing back

(continued on inside back cover)

President Weisshaupt. Please do. I like the man, and what's more I think it would serve Astoria right if the Moon Roach went patriotic on everyone again. And while on the subject of Weisshaupt, how much do you know of Pushkin? Well, do I win the prise for identifying your most obscure parody, or is it just coincidence and do you not know what the Hell I'm jabbering about? Only time will tell. All other considerations aside, President Weisshaupt is on the books as being one of the only people who helped Cerebus out of a jam when he didn't have to, and he should have some reward for that, shouldn't he?

Next bit of business. In Swords # 1, you said that while a cute and furry aardvark, Cerebus could also be a mean and lethal aardvark. Look again; he hasn't killed anyone since issue 16. So one of my requests is that the little grey beast go out and kill someone right away. And if that's not asking too much, see if this is. I know five requests is pushing it a little, but let me make my case for this last one. It's the person Cerebus should kill. This may sound very blood-thirsty, but the fact is, there is one person in your ancient world who deserves death at the hands of the Mighty Aardvark. Who, you ask? We were just talking of him. None other than K'cor, the Lord of Imesh. When I first saw him, I thought he was just some one who had cheated Cerebus out of his fortune and tried to kill him. But, despicable as this is, it's nothing compared to the fact that K'cor also demolished Cerebus' home town, as I later found was the case. You really shouldn't let him get off scot free for that.

So that's my fifth and final request for the month. That about wraps it up, but in as spirit of fairness I'd like to leave you with something since I've asked for so much. You know how other comics have slogans to inspire them, such as "Keep 'em flying" or "Long live the Legion!"? Not many of them, but some do. Well, though I will probably receive a letter bomb for this I think Cerebus should join this worthwhile trend, so

Pay it again, Sim.

Tom Lorimer
somewhere in the maritimes

Imesh was not Cerebus' home town, it was the city of his youth. He was brought there from the countryside around the age of nine by his father who . . . . would you all mind sitting back a bit I can't . . . . I say . . . . I can't breathe.

With all due apologies to the "homicide as humour" group, ther is not a whole lot of death coming. Sorry about that, ghouls.

P. S. from Deni -- no, Dave is not left-handed. You are the first to notice Cerebus is the only right-handed swordsman, though.

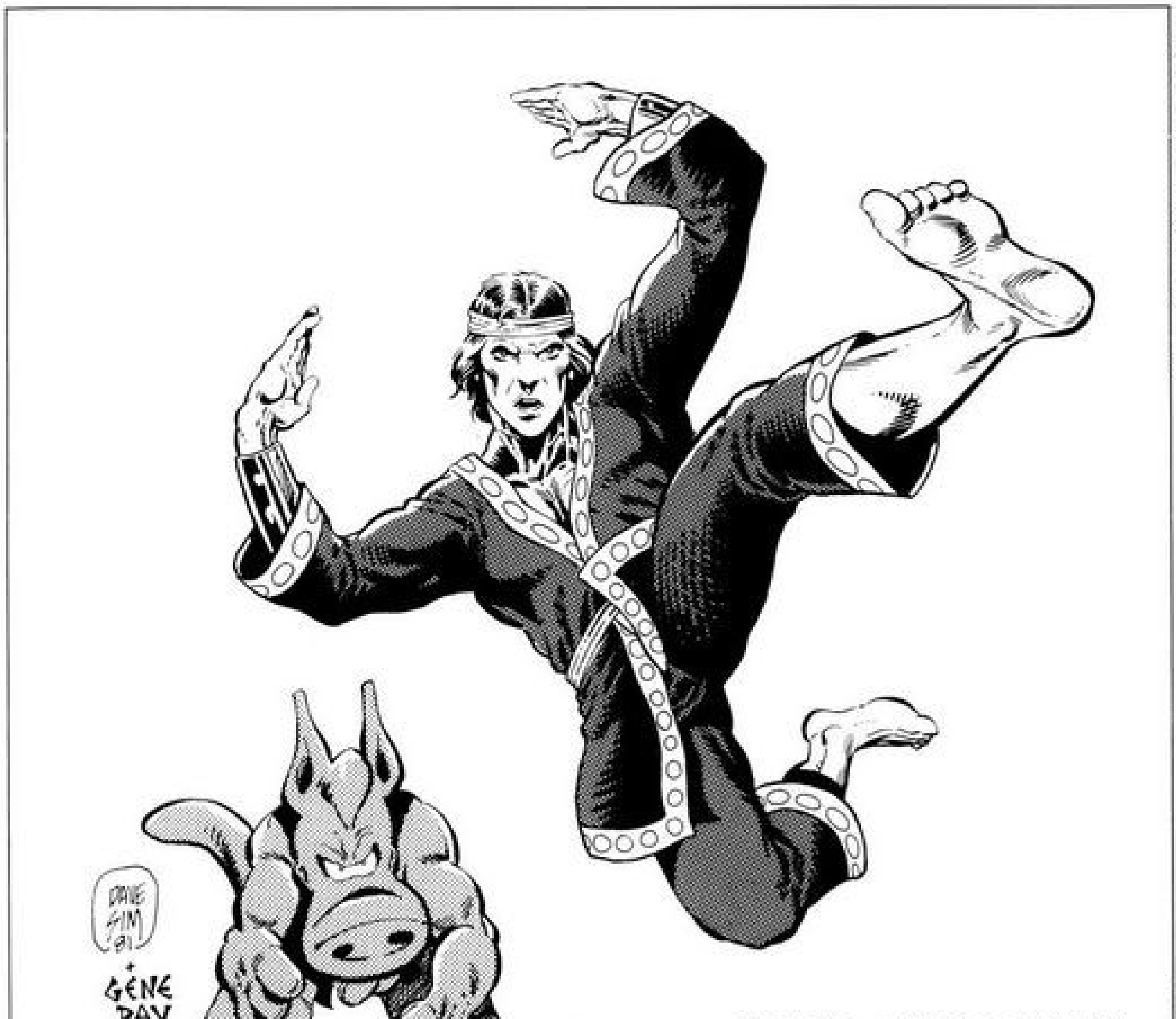


Illustration used to promote the Silver Snail Autograph Session with Dave Sim and Gene Day, December 5, 1981.

Shang Chi © 1982 Marvel Comics Group

Cerebus © 1982 Dave Sim

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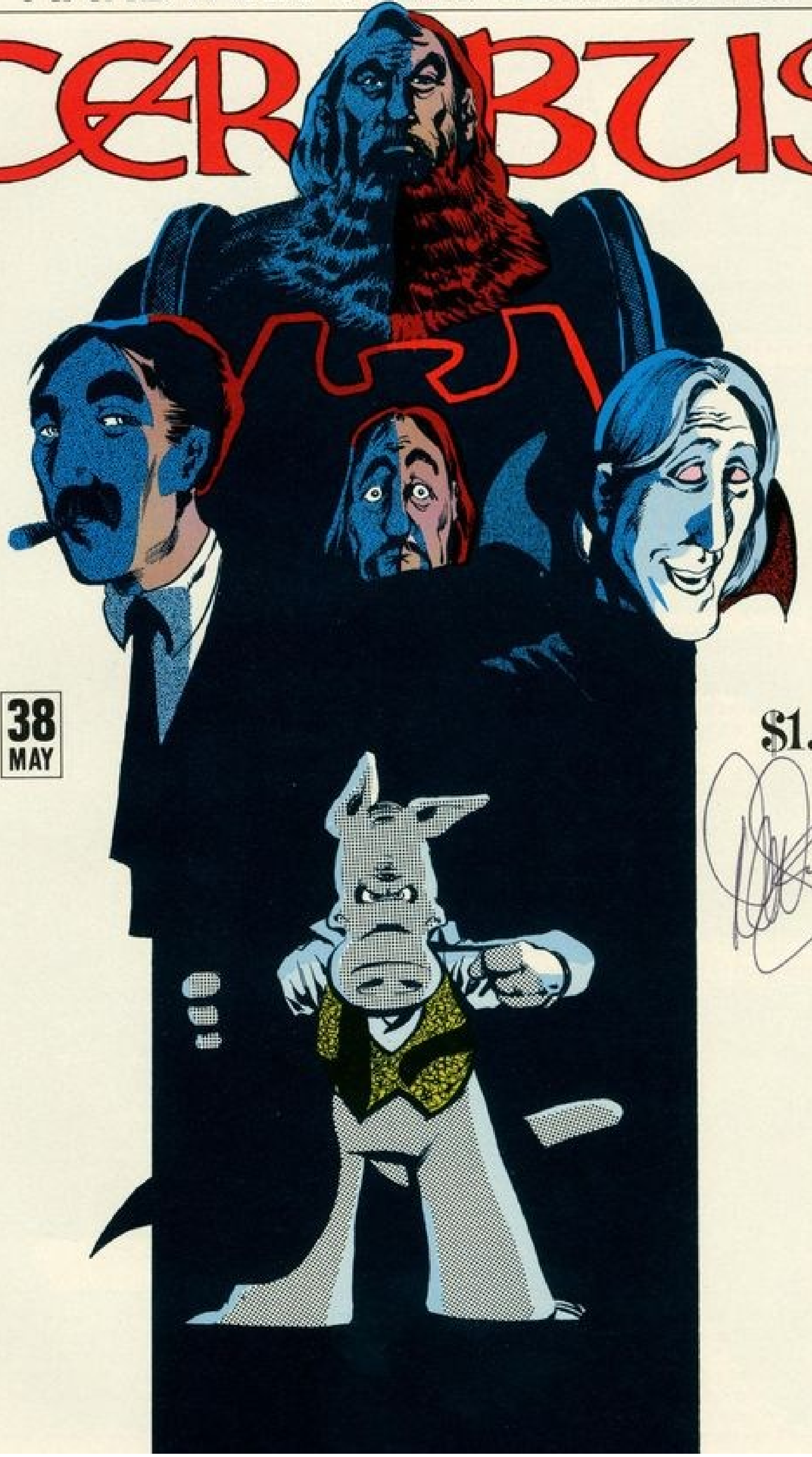
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS



38
MAY

$1.50

Photo by William C. Johnson

A Note from the Publisher

A funny thing happened this month. While Dave and I were working our you-know-whats off getting this issue together, someone down in the United States was selling counterfeit Cerebus # 1's to anyone who was willing to overlook the fact that they were going for only $25 a book. This in the same week that Harry Kremer of Now and Then Books sold a mint Cerebus # 1 for $250.00. It kinda makes me wonder at the business I've gotten into.

This enterprising person, went out and sold some pretty good imitations of the original Cerebus # 1 in such diverse places as San Francisco, Dallas, and New York City. It was all done (pretty much) on one week-end, and sold primarily in comic shops. While my phone didn't stop ringing for three days straight and Dave and I were interviewed by newspapers from Los Angeles and San Francisco, I would have traded in the publicity to insure that this sort of thing had never happened. Somehow, it cheapens the whole idea of what comics are about. I thought that people who read Cerebus were the kind who would understand what this does to a creator. True, we didn't lose any actual money over the deal, but it doesn't exactly restore any of my faith in fans. I spent a couple of days trying to figure out if the negatives could have been stolen (they weren't) or if I had made some stats available to the wrong people (I don't think I did). I know that a lot of people will think that Dave will consider this event as some kind of compliment. I want you to know that we don't see it this way at all. It's no compliment to know that someone thought it was OK to forge what you had worked so hard to accomplish and then sell it to unsuspecting fans. True, I think that we are all guilty from time to time of a little too much greed. What else would explain the fact that so many people bought them at what was obviously a ridiculously low price.

One thing that bothers me is that, for all I know, I met this guy at a convention some time and he told me how much he liked the book. At the same time it was good to hear from the people who cared about what this meant to us. I would like to thank all the people who let us know what was going on, and who expressed their outrage at this happening at all. I appreciate your concern for us and your outrage on our behalf.

But do me a favour . . . the next time someone offers you a book at a price that is too good to be true (and I have heard rumours to the effect that Fantasy Quarterly is being counterfeited too), whether it be a Cerebus or whatever, believe that *it is* too good to be true and turn it down.

If these people have no market to sell to, it won't happen again.

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 38 MAY, 1982

Publisher
Deni Sim

Distributors:
Bud Plant Inc.
P.O. Box 1886
Grass Valley, CA
95945

Pacific Comics
P.O. Box 99217
San Diego, CA
92109

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Cerebus Fan Club
c/o Fred Patten
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Culver City, California
90230
Membership ..... $8.00 per year

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Madison, Wisconsin
53701

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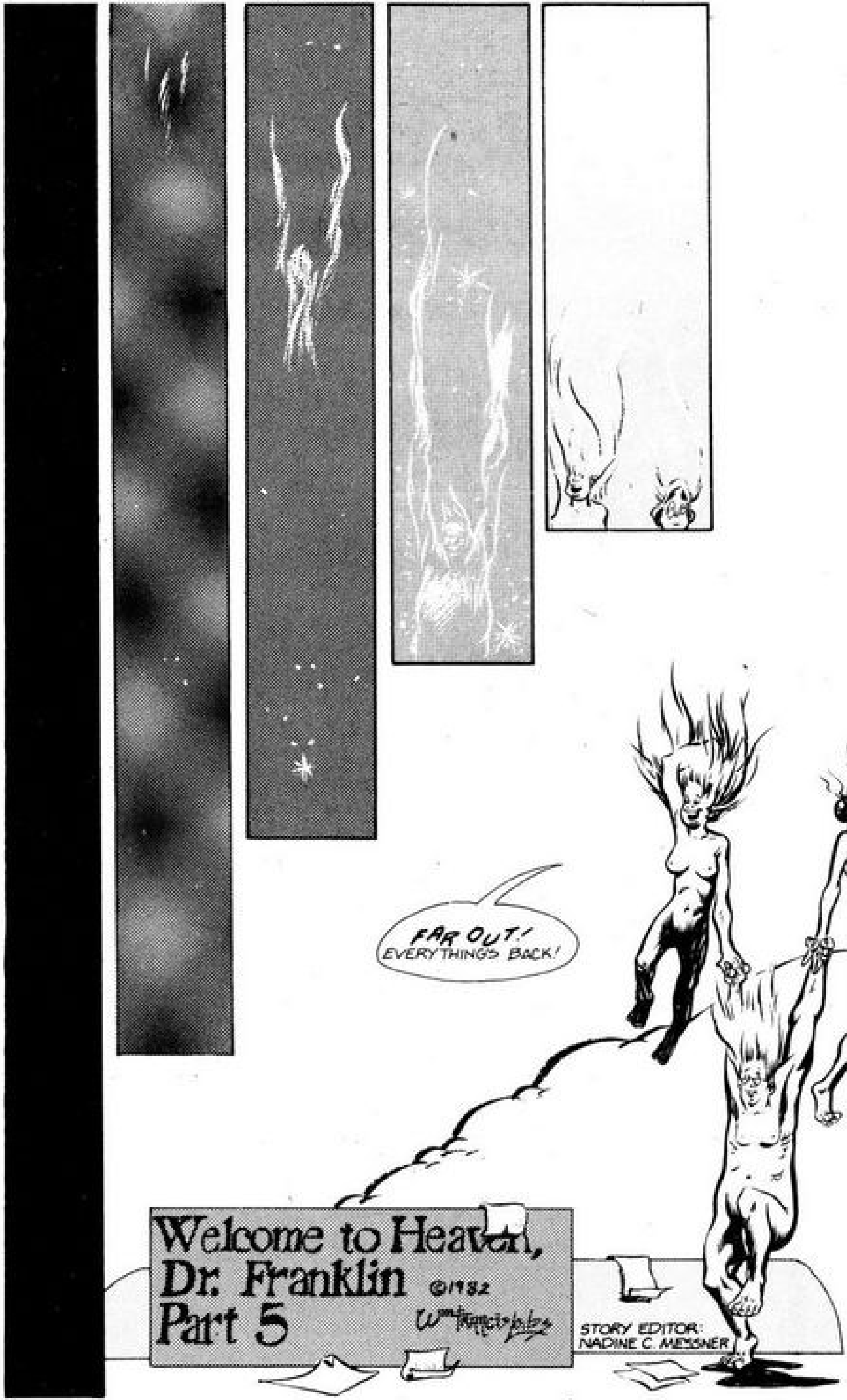
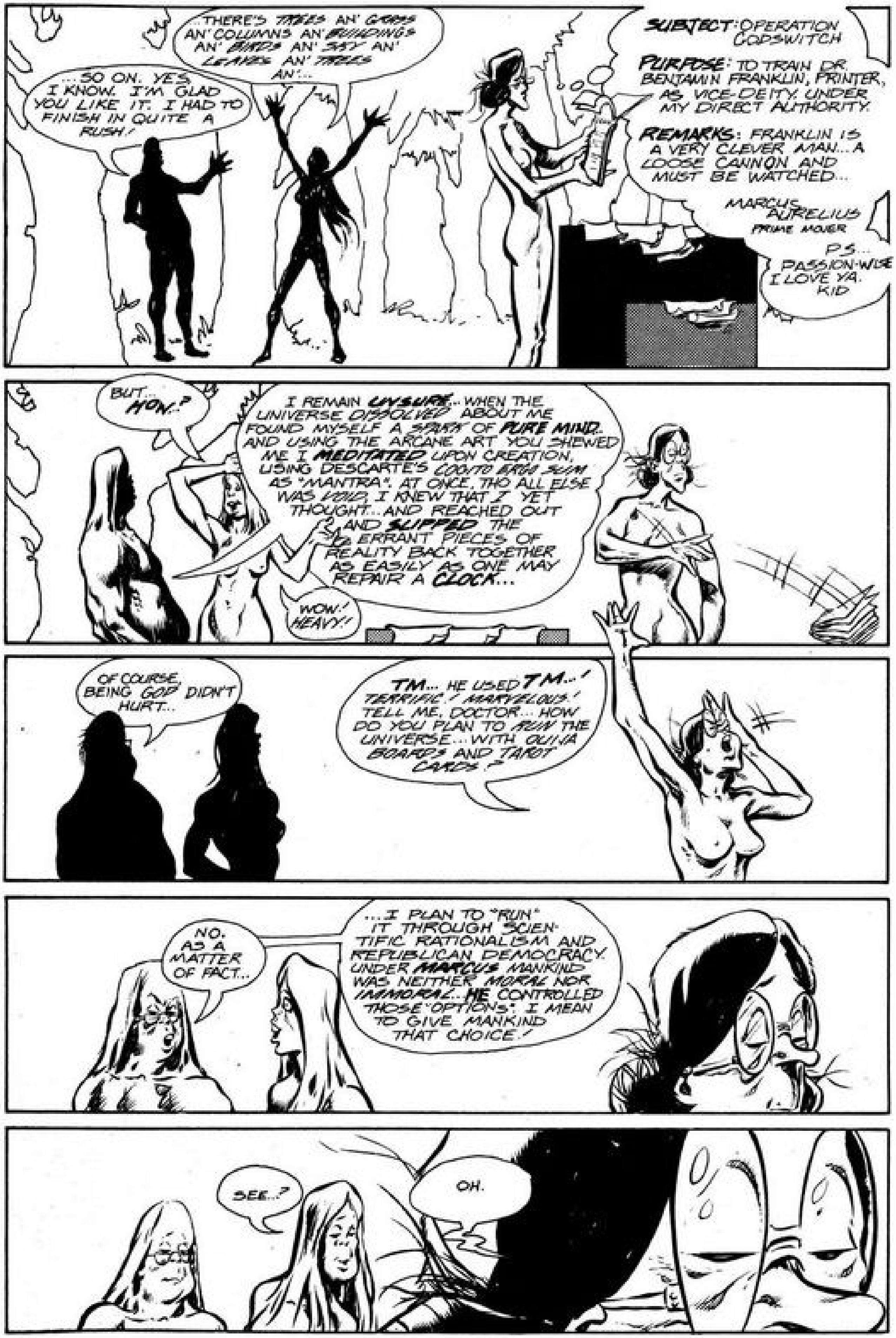
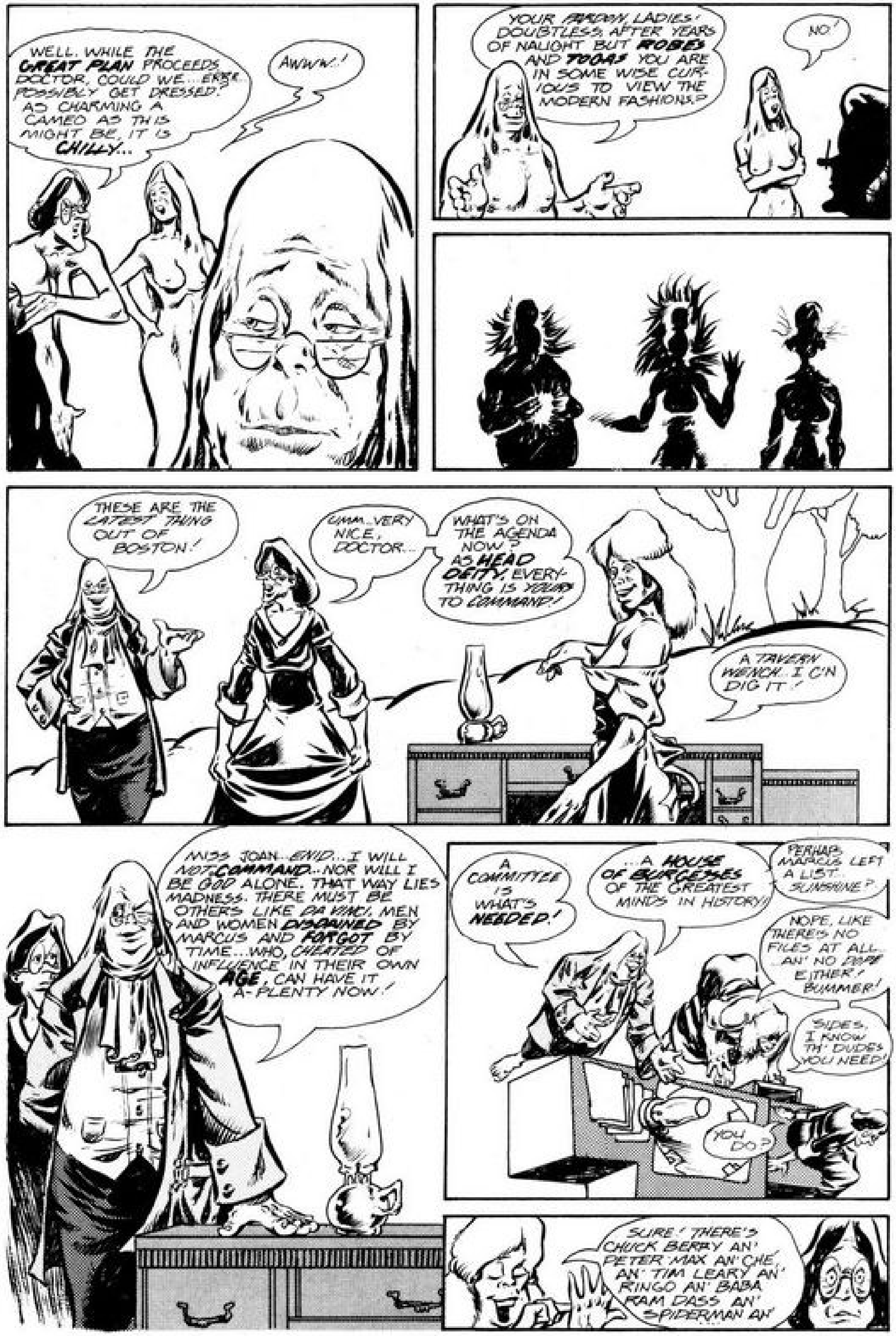
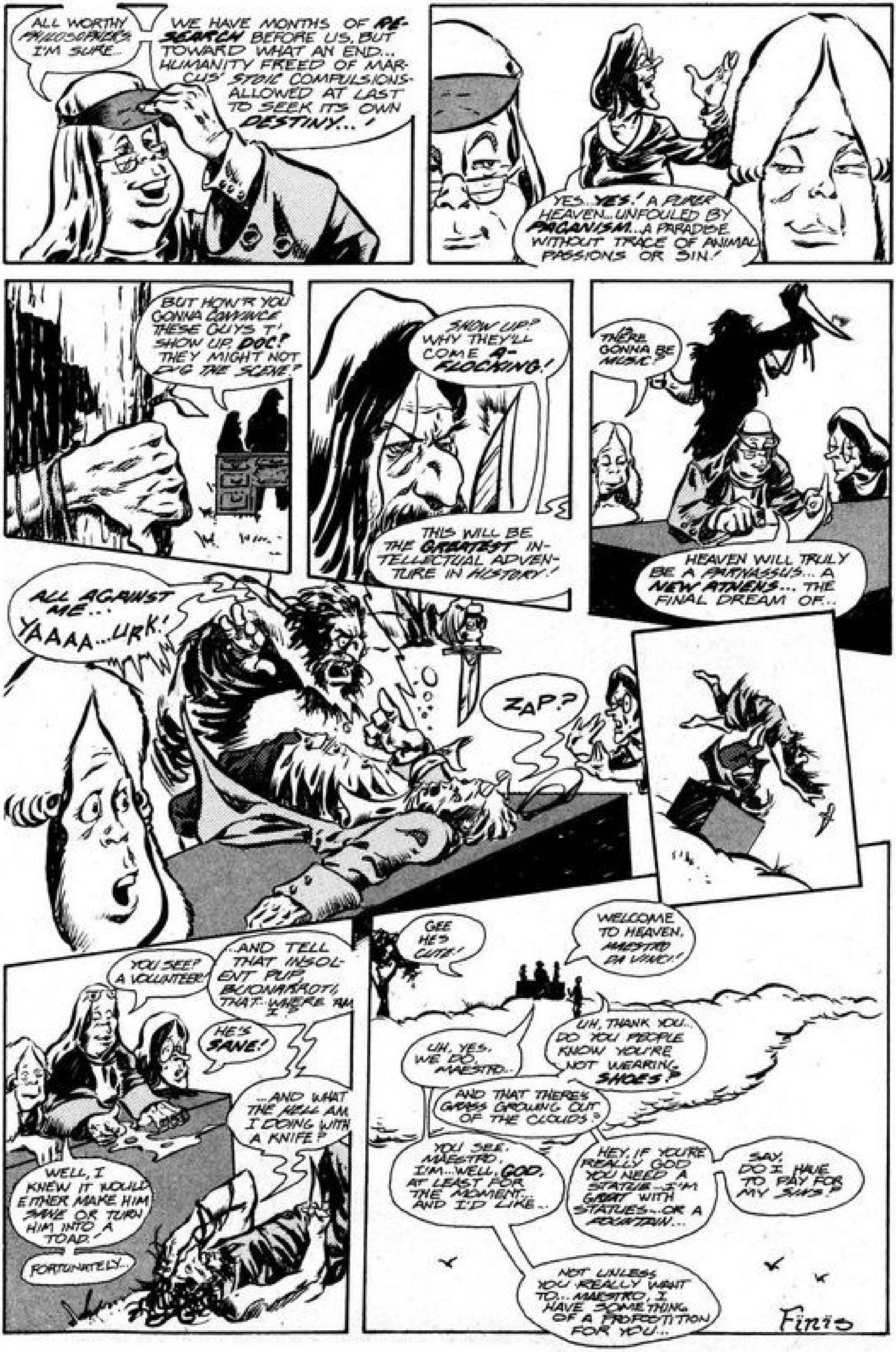
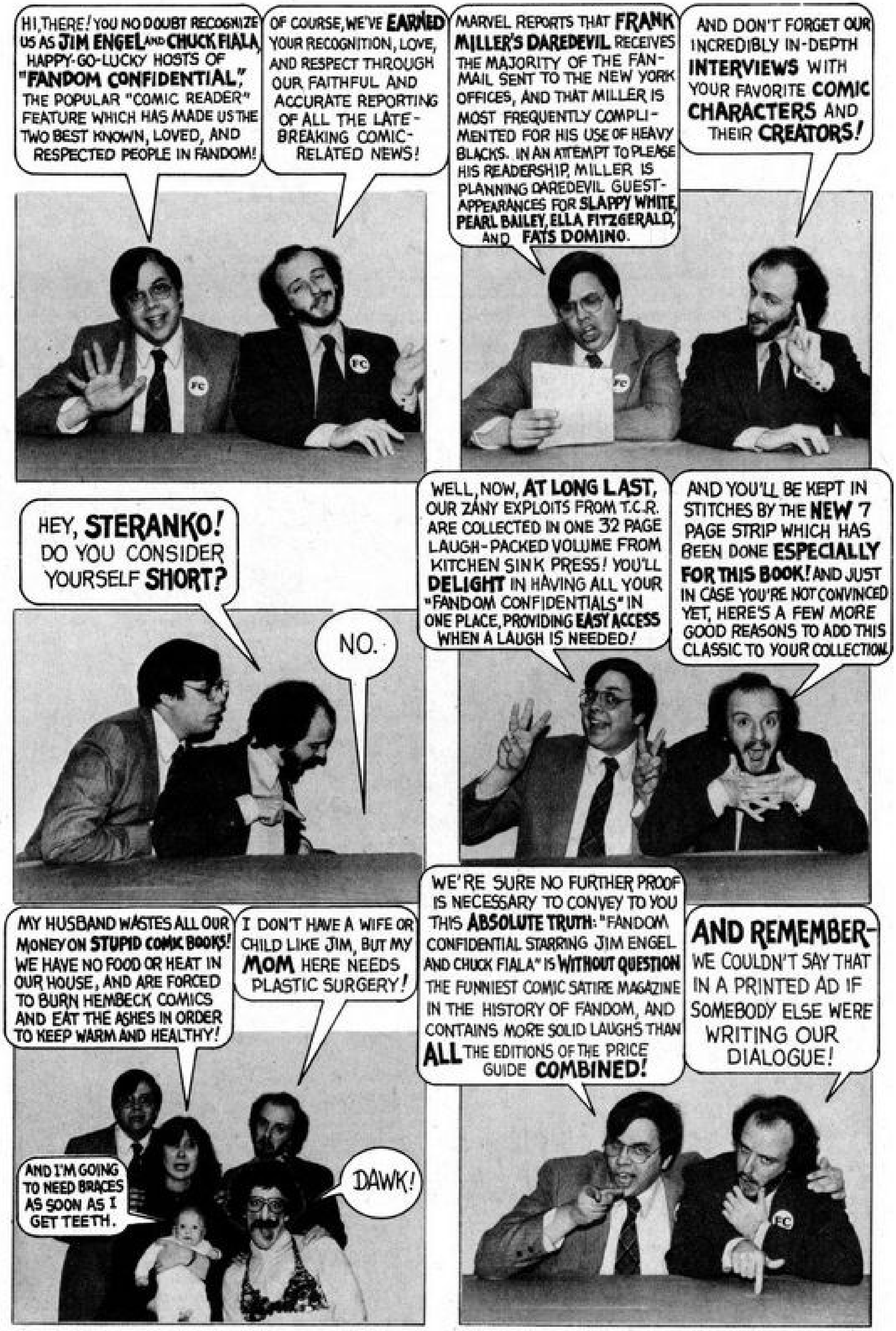
A UNIQUE STORY


FAR OUT! EVERYTHING'S BACK!
Welcome to Heaven, Dr. Franklin Part 5
©1982
STORY EDITOR: NADINE C. MESSNER


...THERE'S TREES AN' GRASS AN' COLUMNS AN' BUILDINGS AN' BIRDS AN' SKY AN' LEAVES AN' TREES AN'...
...SO ON. YES, I KNOW. I'M GLAD YOU LIKE IT. I HAD TO FINISH IN QUITE A RUSH!
SUBJECT: OPERATION GODSWITCH
PURPOSE: TO TRAIN DR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, PRINTER, AS VICE-DEITY UNDER MY DIRECT AUTHORITY.
REMARKS: FRANKLIN IS A VERY CLEVER MAN... A LOOSE CANNON AND MUST BE WATCHED...
MARCUS AURELIUS
PRIME MOVER
P.S... PASSION-WISE I LOVE YA. KID
BUT... HOW..?
I REMAIN UNSURE... WHEN THE UNIVERSE DISSOLVED ABOUT ME FOUND MYSELF A SPARK OF PURE MIND. AND USING THE ARCANE ART YOU SHEWED ME I MEDITATED UPON CREATION, USING DESCARTE'S COGITO ERGO SUM AS "MANTRA". AT ONCE, THO ALL ELSE WAS VOID, I KNEW THAT I YET THOUGHT... AND REACHED OUT AND SLIPPED THE ERRANT PIECES OF REALITY BACK TOGETHER AS EASILY AS ONE MAY REPAIR A CLOCK...
WOW! HEAVY!
OF COURSE, BEING GOD DIDN'T HURT...
TM... HE USED TM...! TERRIFIC! MARVELOUS! TELL ME, DOCTOR... HOW DO YOU PLAN TO RUN THE UNIVERSE... WITH OUIJA BOARDS AND TAROT CARDS?
NO. AS A MATTER OF FACT...
...I PLAN TO "RUN" IT THROUGH SCIENTIFIC RATIONALISM AND REPUBLICAN DEMOCRACY. UNDER MARCUS MANKIND WAS NEITHER MORAL NOR IMMORAL... HE CONTROLLED THOSE "OPTIONS". I MEAN TO GIVE MANKIND THAT CHOICE!
SEE..?
OH.


WELL, WHILE THE GREAT PLAN PROCEEDS, DOCTOR, COULD WE... ERRR... POSSIBLY GET DRESSED? AS CHARMING A CAMEO AS THIS MIGHT BE, IT IS CHILLY...
AWWW..!
YOUR PARDON, LADIES! DOUBTLESS, AFTER YEARS OF NAUGHT BUT ROBES AND TOGAS YOU ARE IN SOME WISE CURIOUS TO VIEW THE MODERN FASHIONS?
NO!
THESE ARE THE LATEST THING OUT OF BOSTON!
UMM... VERY NICE, DOCTOR...
WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA NOW? AS HEAD DEITY, EVERYTHING IS YOURS TO COMMAND!
A TAVERN WENCH... I C'N DIG IT!
MISS JOAN... ENID... I WILL NOT COMMAND... NOR WILL I BE GOD ALONE. THAT WAY LIES MADNESS. THERE MUST BE OTHERS LIKE DA VINCI, MEN AND WOMEN DISDAINED BY MARCUS AND FORGOT BY TIME... WHO, CHEATED OF INFLUENCE IN THEIR OWN AGE, CAN HAVE IT A-PLENTY NOW!
A COMMITTEE IS WHAT'S NEEDED!
...A HOUSE OF BURGESSES OF THE GREATEST MINDS IN HISTORY!!
PERHAPS MARCUS LEFT A LIST... SUNSHINE?
NOPE, LIKE THERE'S NO FILES AT ALL... AN' NO DOPE EITHER! BUMMER!
'SIDES, I KNOW TH' DUDES YOU NEED!
YOU DO?
SURE! THERE'S CHUCK BERRY AN' PETER MAX AN' CHE AN' TIM LEARY AN' RINGO AN' BABA RAM DASS AN' SPIDERMAN AN'


ALL WORTHY PHILOSOPHERS I'M SURE...
WE HAVE MONTHS OF RESEARCH BEFORE US, BUT TOWARD WHAT AN END... HUMANITY FREED OF MARCUS' STOIC COMPULSIONS- ALLOWED AT LAST TO SEEK ITS OWN DESTINY...!
YES...YES! A PURER HEAVEN...UNFOULED BY PAGANISM...A PARADISE WITHOUT TRACE OF ANIMAL PASSIONS OR SIN!
BUT HOW'R YOU GONNA CONVINCE THESE GUYS T' SHOW UP, DOC? THEY MIGHT NOT DIG THE SCENE?
SHOW UP? WHY THEY'LL COME A-FLOCKING!
THIS WILL BE THE GREATEST INTELLECTUAL ADVENTURE IN HISTORY!
IS THERE GONNA BE MUSIC?
HEAVEN WILL TRULY BE A PARNASSUS... A NEW ATHENS... THE FINAL DREAM OF...
ALL AGAINST ME... YAAAA...URK!
ZAP?
YOU SEE? A VOLUNTEER!
...AND TELL THAT INSOLENT PUP, BUONARROTI, THAT... WHERE AM I?
HE'S SANE!
...AND WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING WITH A KNIFE?
WELL, I KNEW IT WOULD EITHER MAKE HIM SANE OR TURN HIM INTO A TOAD.
FORTUNATELY...
GEE HE'S CUTE!
WELCOME TO HEAVEN, MAESTRO DA VINCI!
UH, YES, WE DO, MAESTRO...
UH, THANK YOU... DO YOU PEOPLE KNOW YOU'RE NOT WEARIN' SHOES?
AND THAT THERE'S GRASS GROWING OUT OF THE CLOUDS?
YOU SEE, MAESTRO, I'M...WELL, GOD, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT... AND I'D LIKE...
HEY, IF YOU'RE REALLY GOD YOU NEED A STATUE...I'M GREAT WITH STATUES...OR A FOUNTAIN...
SAY, DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR MY SINS?
NOT UNLESS YOU REALLY WANT TO... MAESTRO, I HAVE SOMETHING OF A PROPOSITION FOR YOU...
Finis


HI, THERE! YOU NO DOUBT RECOGNIZE US AS JIM ENGEL AND CHUCK FIALA, HAPPY-GO-LUCKY HOSTS OF "FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL," THE POPULAR "COMIC READER" FEATURE WHICH HAS MADE US THE TWO BEST KNOWN, LOVED, AND RESPECTED PEOPLE IN FANDOM!
OF COURSE, WE'VE EARNED YOUR RECOGNITION, LOVE, AND RESPECT THROUGH OUR FAITHFUL AND ACCURATE REPORTING OF ALL THE LATE-BREAKING COMIC-RELATED NEWS!
FC
FC
MARVEL REPORTS THAT FRANK MILLER'S DAREDEVIL RECEIVES THE MAJORITY OF THE FAN-MAIL SENT TO THE NEW YORK OFFICES, AND THAT MILLER IS MOST FREQUENTLY COMPLIMENTED FOR HIS USE OF HEAVY BLACKS. IN AN ATTEMPT TO PLEASE HIS READERSHIP, MILLER IS PLANNING DAREDEVIL GUEST-APPEARANCES FOR SLAPPY WHITE, PEARL BAILEY, ELLA FITZGERALD, AND FATS DOMINO.
AND DON'T FORGET OUR INCREDIBLY IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH YOUR FAVORITE COMIC CHARACTERS AND THEIR CREATORS!
FC
HEY, STERANKO! DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF SHORT?
NO.
WELL, NOW, AT LONG LAST, OUR ZANY EXPLOITS FROM T.C.R. ARE COLLECTED IN ONE 32 PAGE LAUGH-PACKED VOLUME FROM KITCHEN SINK PRESS! YOU'LL DELIGHT IN HAVING ALL YOUR "FANDOM CONFIDENTIALS" IN ONE PLACE, PROVIDING EASY ACCESS WHEN A LAUGH IS NEEDED!
AND YOU'LL BE KEPT IN STITCHES BY THE NEW 7 PAGE STRIP WHICH HAS BEEN DONE ESPECIALLY FOR THIS BOOK! AND JUST IN CASE YOU'RE NOT CONVINCED YET, HERE'S A FEW MORE GOOD REASONS TO ADD THIS CLASSIC TO YOUR COLLECTION.
MY HUSBAND WASTES ALL OUR MONEY ON STUPID COMIC BOOKS! WE HAVE NO FOOD OR HEAT IN OUR HOUSE, AND ARE FORCED TO BURN HEMBECK COMICS AND EAT THE ASHES IN ORDER TO KEEP WARM AND HEALTHY!
I DON'T HAVE A WIFE OR CHILD LIKE JIM, BUT MY MOM HERE NEEDS PLASTIC SURGERY!
AND I'M GOING TO NEED BRACES AS SOON AS I GET TEETH.
DAWK!
WE'RE SURE NO FURTHER PROOF IS NECESSARY TO CONVEY TO YOU THIS ABSOLUTE TRUTH: "FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL STARRING JIM ENGEL AND CHUCK FIALA" IS WITHOUT QUESTION THE FUNNIEST COMIC SATIRE MAGAZINE IN THE HISTORY OF FANDOM, AND CONTAINS MORE SOLID LAUGHS THAN ALL THE EDITIONS OF THE PRICE GUIDE COMBINED!
AND REMEMBER– WE COULDN'T SAY THAT IN A PRINTED AD IF SOMEBODY ELSE WERE WRITING OUR DIALOGUE!
FC

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni

Having been hit with an incredible 'double wammy' (your own Cerebus # 36 and the equally phenominal Master of Kung Fu # 114 ---- I may write Doug and Gene as well) this month, I am moved to write my first letter ever to any publication.

The only way #36 could have been better is if it had been longer (I also know 22 pages is enough of a strain on you). This final panel blew away anything I have ever seen in a comic (barring certain scenes in Starlin's Metamorphosis Odyssey), and this issue in general brought to full development (or it's fullest development yet -- please don't stop) an artistic theme that is actually my main reason for writing this letter. Tell me if I'm wrong, but I have perceived your city layouts (especially the interiors) as having an 'Art-Deco' quality to them that I ABSOLUTELY ADORE and the fact that CEREBUS is printed in black and white is essential to this. *Please don't do the book in colour.* In my opinion, one of the reasons the humor is successful is that it is contrasted with the extreme 'formality' of the artwork. Don't get me wrong; I would like to see the color covers continued --- just don't fool with the b and w of the stories. Do color reprints if you must for Bill Hall and the others, but keep the originals as they are.

By the way, I have also noted (again with extreme delight) a certain 'chronological eclecticism' in the work as a whole (i.e. the 18th century dress, the 15th and 16th century political climate, and the aforementioned 1920's thru 1940's interiors). Is this conscious on your part or did it just sort of fall into place that way?

R. e. 'Unique Stories'; I sort of half-liked "Welcome to heaven, Dr. Franklin" so far, but I am also in the same camp as Michael Koenecke of Austin. Your own story is so truly outstanding that it gets in the way of giving 'Unique Stories' the appreciation they deserve (this is analogous to running an episode of M*A*S*H in installments on the commercial breaks in 'Shogun'). The stories just might get the sort of exposure they need better if they were published as separate books -- I remember a certain comic dealing with the exploits of a barbarian aardvark that got it's start that way . . .

In closing let me reiterate my sincere congratulations on an excellent run thus far, and also communicate my wonderment at learning that the 'High Society' plot line runs through issue 50. I thought it probably was destined for it's dénouement around number 40, but I will be watching eagerly to see how you sustain it that long (must be some kind of comic book record for continuous plot --- even MOKF's 'Warriors of the Golden Dawn' cycle didn't run that long). Take care and keep on Cookin'!!!

P.S. Count me among the ranks of avid Astoria watchers; I once had a girl friend like her (I mean right down to the ice-water circulatory system) except that she wasn't that tall and didn't inhale drugs and get the hots for me (pity).

Steve Dinges
12559 E. 41st Street
Number 423
Tulsa, OK

18th century dress? 15th and 16th century political climate? 1920's and 1940's interiors? I think I see why people feel the background to be inconsistent. The idea I am trying to get across is a culture (Upper Class Iest) far removed and much evolved from the rest of the places that have appeared in the book. I try to keep the clothing, interiors, and decorations very basic to indicate that the New Merchant Class is evolving the New Artisan Class (eager to siphon off the New Money, but more at home rendering religious artifacts than ornate grillwork). The Regency Hotel is an Estarcian anomaly; the rest of the continent is lagging some hundred years behind. More on the unique-ness of Upper-class Iest next issue.

Dear Dave and Deni

I'm writing this letter cause I've got this desire to tell artists whose work gives me pleasure how much I appreciate it. Appreciation duly noted? Good.

The Night Before was a marvelous, marvelous work. There are very few pieces of such emotional power in the comics field. This issue was very moving. It's really hard to explain Cerebus to people, cause they find it hard to believe that a humour story can also have real effective characters. I don't really understand it either; I just enjoy it. What I liked most about this issue was the lack of captions. The typical Marvel/DC writer would lay it on thick with the likes of "The Earth-Pig bows his head, weighed down with sad remembrances of things past . . ." (page 7, panel 3) or "The Earth-Pig's eyes widened with shock, . . ." (Page 17 panel 1) (that's for the dribblebrains who can't look at the picture and see Cerebus' eyes widening) (Hey, you think I can write for Marvel now?) You have the skill as an artist to show emotions through facial expressions (and the marvelous effect of the tear on the last page.) (Am I correct in assuming the sword was found with the Cootie's gold?) (Are all these parenthetical asides annoying you . . . ?)

You are absolutely right; Cerebus is finally starting to realize what friendship means, though he won't admit it to others. While Jaka is speaking to him, he is snide; But when she is gone, the tears flow.

Well, I like a slow-paced story as much as anyone, but I am waiting for the continuation of the Petuniacon plot, and an explanation as to why Astoria is lying to Cerebus about their financial situation. Also, the return of that irascable and irrepressible father/son team of Julius and Elrod. And how about the whole first family of Palnu, including baby brother Cerebus, locked in a closet?

And I'm going crazy trying to figure out what's going to happed next issue that's so important that you had to count down to it! I have a query, which I hope you'll answer, cause it concerns what seems to be a major discrepency in your storyline. The question is: HOW IN TARIM'S NAME DID CEREBUS GET TO BE AMBASSADOR IN IEST? I mean, in issue 16 he quits his job with Lord Julius, goes riding into the sunset. Then he becomes an active enemy of Palnu by leading the T'Gitans, then, after a few more months of wandering, comes to Iest. There he is treated like a King and declared Ranking Diplomatic Representative from Palnu. Now, I would assume that this was a mistaken impression on their part. But now with the tariff business and Julius' visit, it has become apparent that he actually holds the job. How? Is it because people thinking he was effective made him so, forcing Julius to give him that post? (Probably).

And it seems to me that, no matter how haughty Astoria is, she would recognize the most powerful man in Estarcion, which is what Julius seems to be.

Kudos for speaking out on the Great White North; some opposition from world famous Canadians like yourself is needed to stop this unfunny besmirchment of a fine nation.

Brian Doherty
10140-7 Arrowhead Drive East
Jacksonville, Florida

Cerebus is in the unusual situation of being one of the few high level bureaucrats to leave his high paying job in Lord Julius' bureaucracy. Like the Chief of Staff who leaves the White House to become a partner in a "consulting firm" (as an example), the scent of success lingers on, attracting exploiters both benevolent and malevolent. Because Lord Julius is one of the single most charismatic and influential figures on the continent, anyone who gets close to him becomes an endless source of fascination. The situation of a wealthy former intimate of former head of state who exploits his notoriety to ensure that he never has to pay for another meal is not unheard of. Since Iest is in decline, someone who has only recently left Lord Julius' employ showing up in the city would certainly qualify as 'Ranking Diplomatic Representative' . . . a different concept from "Ambassador".

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni

I must admit that I've been a bit down on your mag recently, feeling that you, and Cerebus, have gotten away from many of the qualities that have made this mag such a wonder. But now that I've read "The Night Before"(# 36), my faith and enjoyment are restored. Why? Well, firstly because I see that the "changes" in Cerebus and the mag have all been part of a master plan (you sneaky devil, you) and that my dissatisfaction was largely a result of being so totally taken in by your treatment of them. (Has anybody ever mentioned to you the problems of being too good at something?) Secondly, because the story addressed many of the matters that have been bothering me and brought them into a clear focus. And thirdly because it was simply en exceedingly well-done tale.

Quite apart from the fascinating Cerebus/Jaka interplay, I was quite taken by their confrontation and the way in which it delineated the great evolution/devolution of Cerebus himself. I never particularly liked, sympathized with, or identified with Cerebus himself in the past but I find that I miss that "version" of him now. (As Harry Truman once said of some right-wing dictator: "He may be an S.O.B., but he's *our* S.O.B." -- except that Mr. Truman didn't use the abbreviations, of course. That, in an affectionate way, is how I feel about the aardvark.)

Additionally, for once I very much enjoyed your "incomplete" backgrounds. They opened up and closed down the atmosphere in an entirely appropriate sequence and added much emotional impact to the story.

You asked for comments on your Unique Stories, so I'll give you some. I think you've got a good idea, especially since I'm not sure if I'd buy a whole book by an untried (by me) artist. (That's a no to your question in the lettercol.) However, it is nice to sample their work and thus easily find out if one might like to see more of it. Concerning the Ben Franklin series, I can certainly say that it *is* unique, and also interesting. I can't say that I agree with its theology; in fact, I found it quite repellent at the start. However, I find that if I view it as an allegory, rather than the author's literal or intended enterpretation of Heaven, then there is quite a lot that I can get out of it.

Finally (at last!), I note that six of the seven letters printed in the issue were from American readers. Oh no! Another Canadian cultural institution is on the road to Americanization. It happened to the National Hockey League (which is still, of course, Canada's primary cultural institution) and it can happen to Cerebus. So I say: Re-Canadianize Cerebus! Let's get some government initiative here (DREE, LIP, OFY, FIRA, LADEDA, or whatever) to fight yet another foreigh takeover. We kept the World Football League out of the country, so we can darn well help a furry animal. (Hey, maybe Greenpeace will help. Dye him white and put him on his belly and Cerebus would pass for a baby seal. Couldn't he?)

T.M. Maple

Dree, Lip Ofy and Fira, for those American "hosers" who may not know are the Canadian gods of Earth, Air, Fire and Hockey respectively. (No?)

Dear Dave (and Deni, too)

It was the tear that did it. For some reason or other my copy of # 35 was unavailable to me so, this month when I went down to Joel's shop (the local nexus point for Aardvark fans) to buy my monthly alotment of funny-books, I was pleased to see that both # 35 and # 36 had come in. A friend (who had already read both issues) was pointing out the funnier parts of # 35 (including Cerebus' prophecy for Mak Muffin, Cerebus' reaction on page 3 to Astoria's medicinal compound, the timely belch on pg. 12 among others) when upon reaching the last page, he showed me Jaka was back. After reading # 36, I realised that I had to read it again. This comic was, in an effort to refrain from using a typical letter-writing cliché, a literal masterpiece. The artwork was, as expected, also magnificent. We're talking one of the top ten comics of the decade here. True quality.

Call it an aardvarkian "My Dinner With Andre".

But it was the tear that was the clincher. The final scene in issue # 6 when Cerebus left Jaka was reversed in a realistic yet deeply touching way. The little "antique" that Jaka bought was the final touch. The twist. O. Henry would be proud. There were times when my friends would ask me why a fifteen year old would read comic books. After all, they had grown out of that seemingly childish habit, hadn't they? I was begining to wonder if I should quit. After # 36, I'm with you for life.

Thanks for making me change my mind

Joe Kilmartin
9 Cordova Street
Nepeaon, Ont.

Begining to wonder if you should quit? Before I even have a chance to stuff Lord Julius, Elrod and Cerebus into a closet together?

Perish the thought!!

Dear Dave

The letters in issue 36 (Give us gore! Blood and gore! Let's see Cerebus kill someone!) have finally persuaded me to write. Mainly what I wanted to say is: Don't listen to them I *like* watching Cerebus -- the hard-headed, mighty-thewed barbarian -- blunder his way through high society. This is a great idea and should make it impossible for anyone to try and write serious sword and sorcery ever again. (unfortunately it probably won't have that effect at all.) Though it's possible that I feel this way only because Cerebus is the only comic book I read. (Howard the Duck used to be the only comic book I read, but, -- well, let's not get into that again.)

Anyway, keep up the good work. Issue 36 was marvelous. You just keep getting better and better. I have only one question: Are we ever going to see Lord Julius' brothers, Arthur and Leonard? I'm a Groucho Marxist from way back.

Lisa Goldstein
1471 Excelsior Ave.
Oakland, CA

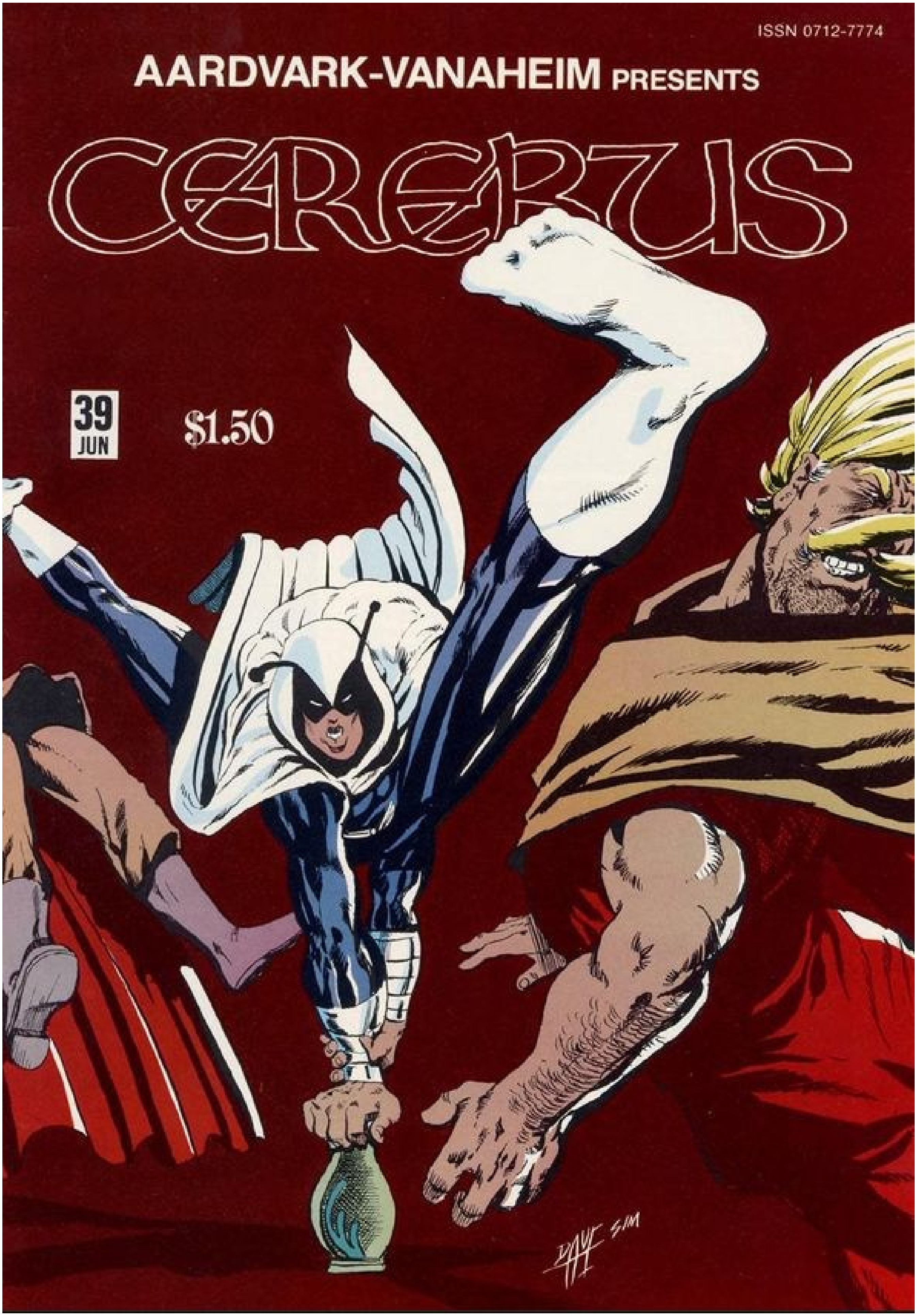
Arthur and Leonard are a ways off, yet. The blonde mute Stromm in issues 17 and 18 was supposed to hold the Arthur fans at bay, while Leonard has to wait for the right moment ("he say wait, and I'ma stand right he' "). The panel transcripts in this issue are for all the Julius fans.

Jack Katz, Wendy and Richard Pini and Mike Grell try vainly to conceal their disappointment as Dave Sim "Spots the Photographer" while on the Alternative Comics Panel, at the 1981 San Diego Comic Convention to zip into a quick 1-0 lead in the game that has become a fan favorite in panel audiences everywhere.

ISSN 0712-7774

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS



39
JUN

$1.50

Photo by William C. Johnson

A Note from the Publisher

This month I'm just going to name a few items that I feel might be of interest to you.

One important item is that Barry Windsor-Smith will not be doing the cover to Swords of Cerebus Volume IV. A few things have come up and so Barry has been forced to post-pone it to a later date. Dave has painted a cover for that issue and we will try to catch Barry at a better time for another issue.

The F.O.O.G. Portfolio (Friends of Ol' Gerber), to benefit Steve Gerber in his legal battle with Marvel is due to be released just before this issue goes out. Logic dictates that as you read this, it should be available to you. I urge you to check this out, as the artists who worked on it all did a really fine job.

The reprint of Swords of Cerebus Volume I will be shipping out at the same time as F.O.O.G., so it too should be available as you read this. Dave has drawn a new cover for it and added an introduction to the story he did with Marshall Rogers, "Diamondback".

I will also be moving into a new office in July. The main reason for the move is that I need the space!! My original office seemed impossible to fill just five months ago, when I moved into it. Now it has gotten so cramped that I can hardly move. I also want to start making Cerebus T-shirts, and that takes a bit of space. I sure hope that this time the office won't fill up as quickly.

My last item concerns buttons. We have authorized Rick Crowe at The Comic Book Shop in Nottingham, England to begin production of Cerebus buttons. They are proposing to make five different buttons, two of them Cerebus and the other three from other characters in the book. (Probably Elrod and the Moon Roach for beginners if the samples they sent are any indication). As we get more definite information concerning this, I will pass it on to you. Let me point out that these folks went to the trouble of getting our permission to do this, and are paying Dave royalties in advance. I wish there were more people who did business this way.

On the subject of our new artist in Unique Stories, I wish that I could give you some background on Bob Conway, but the truth is I know very little about him. But I am really happy that I have finally been able to place his story in Unique. My only regret is that it took me so many months to organize myself to the point where I knew what was going in and could schedule it.

That's about it for this issue. See you all next month!!

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. I NO. 39 JUNE 1982

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Deni Sim

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AARDVARK COMMENT

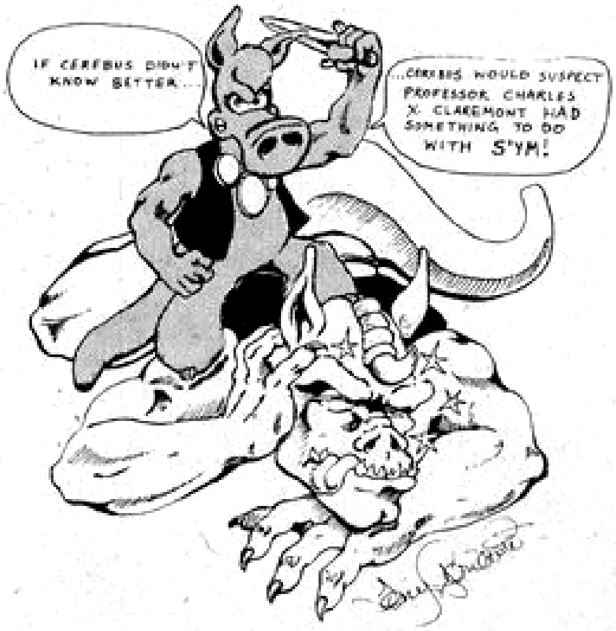
P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave

Got to say that Cerebus is one of my favorites. I've enjoyed every issue and volume of "Swords" that has come out so far! I started with # 23, and when I picked up X-Men # 160 last week . . . Well . . . I loved it! Claremont told me that he'd sneak Cerebus in someday, and he finally did! Hope you enjoyed the earth-pig's "guest-star" role! I did! Keep up the great work on Cerebus!

Tony Gervasio
1016 S. Roosevelt St.
Tempe, Arizona 85281

S'ym liked tall purple character. S'ym laughed guts out. S'ym laughed so hard, S'ym forgot to ask for royalty cheque. Is okay, though, because S'ym's royalty cheques for Moon Roach are stuck in mail. Blame post office.


IF CEREBUS DIDN'T KNOW BETTER...
...CEREBUS WOULD SUSPECT PROFESSOR CHARLES X. CLAREMONT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH S'YM!

When I got this in the mail, I hadn't received X-Men # 160 yet. It makes a lot more sense to me now.

Dear Dave

After the repeated urgings of a friend of mine, I finally discovered Cerebus for myself last week and now I finally see what I've been missing.

After the impressive review that TCJ did of you a year or so ago I almost got some issues then, but there was just something about a comic about an aardvark . . . I'm not much of a funny animal fan outside of enjoying animated cartoons, plus I burned out real quick on Howard the Duck which Cerebus reminded me of superficially anyway. The problem I found with Howard is that after the novelty wore off, and Frank Brunner left, the writing just wasn't interesting enough for me to hold on, plus Gene Colon's art never fluctuated in style or intent from one issue to the next so that everything became one drab blur.

Cerebus, on the other hand, noticeably changes from one issue to the next, growing layer upon layer, and unlike H the D, the cynical humour Steve Gerber wrote pales next to the genuine inventive cynicism you write. I like bitter humour and in Cerebus it sounds genuine. I haven't read every issue of Cerebus yet, but I have read most of them and it's really outstanding. Your art may not be as pretty as Wendy Pini's, but it is extremely good and highly inovative, and I like the writing in Cerebus more than that in Elfquest because there's more depth to it and more experimentation. I'm *very* impressed by what you're doing.

James Van Hise
San Diego, CA

Kind words from James Van Hise of that fan institution The Rockets Blast Comic Collector. I remember getting my first copy in the mail (# 79, I believe) in 1970. That's almost five years ago. (Isn't it?)

Dear Dave and Deni

Your work on Cerebus is very well done. I have enjoyed the aardvark's adventures since issue # 14, and you never failed to entertain, enlighten, or eek a smile out of me. I do have a request, though. One of the qualities that attracted me to Cerebus when I first saw the magazine was the wonderful use of slapstick. Not in the writing or drawing specifically, but in your thorough storytelling in general. The overall appearance and atmosphere of the book seems to have a more sophisticated feel these days. Even the more comic moments are utilized purely to underline character (which, by-the-way, you do very well). The only true slapstick is left to Lord Julius, who you portray flawlessly.

As long as you continue to keep your high water-mark standard, you've got me hooked. Good Luck.

Jim Bertrand
1325 South Fifth, Apt. 18
Springfield, Ill. 62704

Aren't you glad you wrote this letter? Everyone say thank you to Jim for asking me to put slapstick back in the book when I was starting to write this issue.

Dear Dave and Deni

I hope that this letter finds you and your Earth-pig happy, healthy and wealthy or at least two out of three.

Cerebus # 37 was humorous enough to ease the memory of Jaka's heartbreak from the preceeding issue. You have been refining Cerebus' world for a long enough time and with such care and skill that is is taking on the feel of an existing alternate reality . . . this can be compared with the coherent dimensions Ditko drafted for Doc Deranged, er, Strange . . . an awesome feat!

My favorite, I say, most reread issues of Cerebus are (pay attention boy) #s 4, 7 & 21. Elrod is charming and one of the few characters that I would not mind meeting in the flesh. The others are Henrot and Jaka.

The one upcoming event in Cerebus that I am awaiting most eagerly is the reunion between Cerebus and his pappy, who he has not seen since he was nine. I keep picturing (and hearing) the scene from the Popeye movie where Poopdeck Pappy tries to deny that he sired that 'Sissypated sniffle snaffle'. Could you at least have Cerebus' pop talk like Popeye. It would fit with the way you have given distinctive cartoon character accents to the more memorable members of the supporting cast. Cerebus talks like Cerebus. 'nuff said. Oops.

How about a one-shot 3-D Cerebus? Not a hologram but a holocomic - I think it would work best with a Mind Games story. Take care and keep Cerebus in trouble . . . and out of Weedsport.

Aardvarks, Albinos and Aliens Comic Shop
8923 North Seneca Street
Weedsport, New York

Oh, he's seen his father since he was nine. He's seen his mother too, but that is another story. Might make a good holocomic.

NOTES

I haven't done a notes section for a while, but a few recurring complaints are going to have to be addressed.

1. *Change the storyline back to Cerebus the Barbarian.*

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

No. Simple? This is an alternative comic -- more to the point this is an independent alternative comic which means I make the decisions. Our circulation has doubled since the beginning of "High Society". I am content with that. I get to do what I want and I get to address an audience of close to fifteen thousand people. I find the letters are invaluable in the fine tuning of the book, which is why I read every letter that comes in at least twice (when it arrives, when I'm composing the letters page and . . . the published ones . . . when I proofread the typesetting). If I changed the storyline as frequently as some are advocating, I would end up with three hundred loosely interwoven episodes. I am attempting a different kind of comic book. Try to think of it as a "what-if" concept. "What if the two hundred and some-odd issues of Fantistic Four made sense as a single story?" What if the characters aged (Cerebus turns 29 between this issue and the next, for example) instead of being the same age for twenty years. What if their situations changed from wealthy to poor to wealthy and back -- not as a five issue plot devise, or "addition to the mythos" by a new creator of the legends, but as a realistic goal. "If I'm going to do this thing for thirty years, why keep everything in a set formula for success? My attitude is that you are paying $1.50 a month to watch me break formulas, stretch conventions, and really test the boundries of artistic freedom. We will get back to Cerebus the Barbarian, just as we always get back to Cerebus the Lover, Cerebus the Politician, Cerebus the Bully, Cerebus the Sorcerer's Apprentice, Cerebus the Buffoon, Cerebus the Gambler, Cerebus the Drunkard. A place for everything and everything in it's place, as my mother used to say.

2. I can't help that you are hurting your potential sales by putting in characters people just picking up the book won't know or care about.

We have received letters from people who have started reading issues since High Society began and enjoyed the book right off -- people who don't know who Jaka is, but who still very much enjoyed # 36, and in fact started reading and buying with that issue. If you read an issue of Cerebus and you really find it too confusing to follow, I'd love to hear where I lost you. I'll try to clear up the confusion as best I can. But if you're worried about other people not being able to understand what's going on and that hurting our sales, you shouldn't. Those who become interested, become hooked, those who don't become interested tend to buy again later on, and find the occasional issue to their taste, in the meantime. I'm extremely gratified by that.

Tying this in with the first answer, I know the book would propably sell four times as many if I did a five-part "Red Snails", followed by "The Tower of the Green Dumbo", and "Droogs in the House" narrated by Robert Hee Oward, but I couldn't face doing that month in and month out, so why do it?

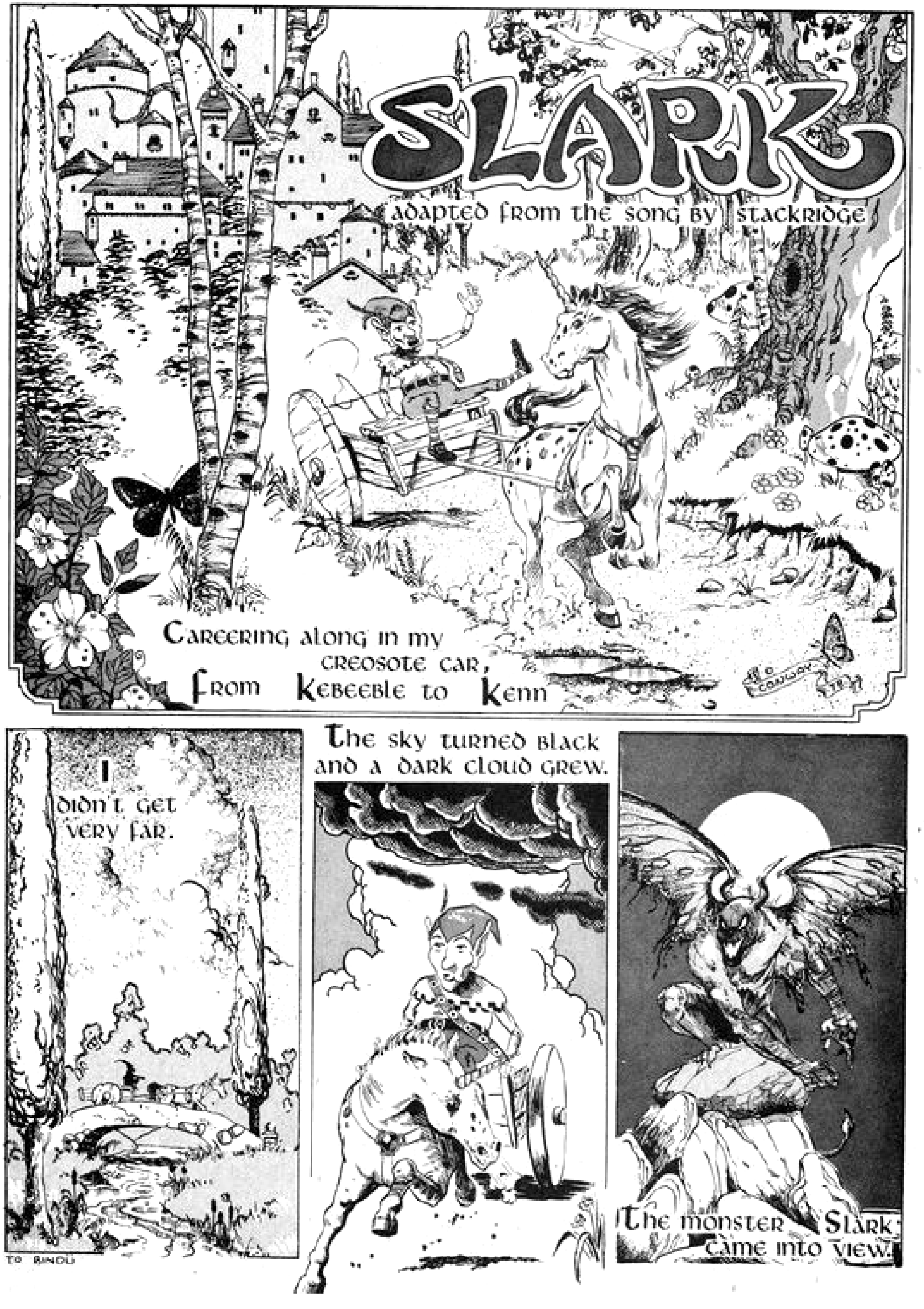
3. Why do you hate comic book conventions?

Confusion about # 37. The story involved Cerebus at a convention, not me. "What if" again. What if Cerebus went to a convention? The upshot of the story was that if you pushed the right buttons, made it clear to him the cause and effect relationship between his job and keeping the strangers happy (and vice versa) he would play along with it. He wishes to maintain a comfortable lifestyle, and he has to do pictures of trees to do it. It's easier than travelling all over Lower Felda, trying to sell the Black Blossom Lotus. I am not Cerebus. Deni is not Astoria or the Elf or Jaka. Not in the literal sense of Cerebus being a thinly-veiled autobiography or manifestation of wishful thinking. I like to draw comic books. Cerebus would never sit still long enough to focus on a single concern like that. At this point, I prefer less structured forums for meeting fans, but I don't dislike conventions

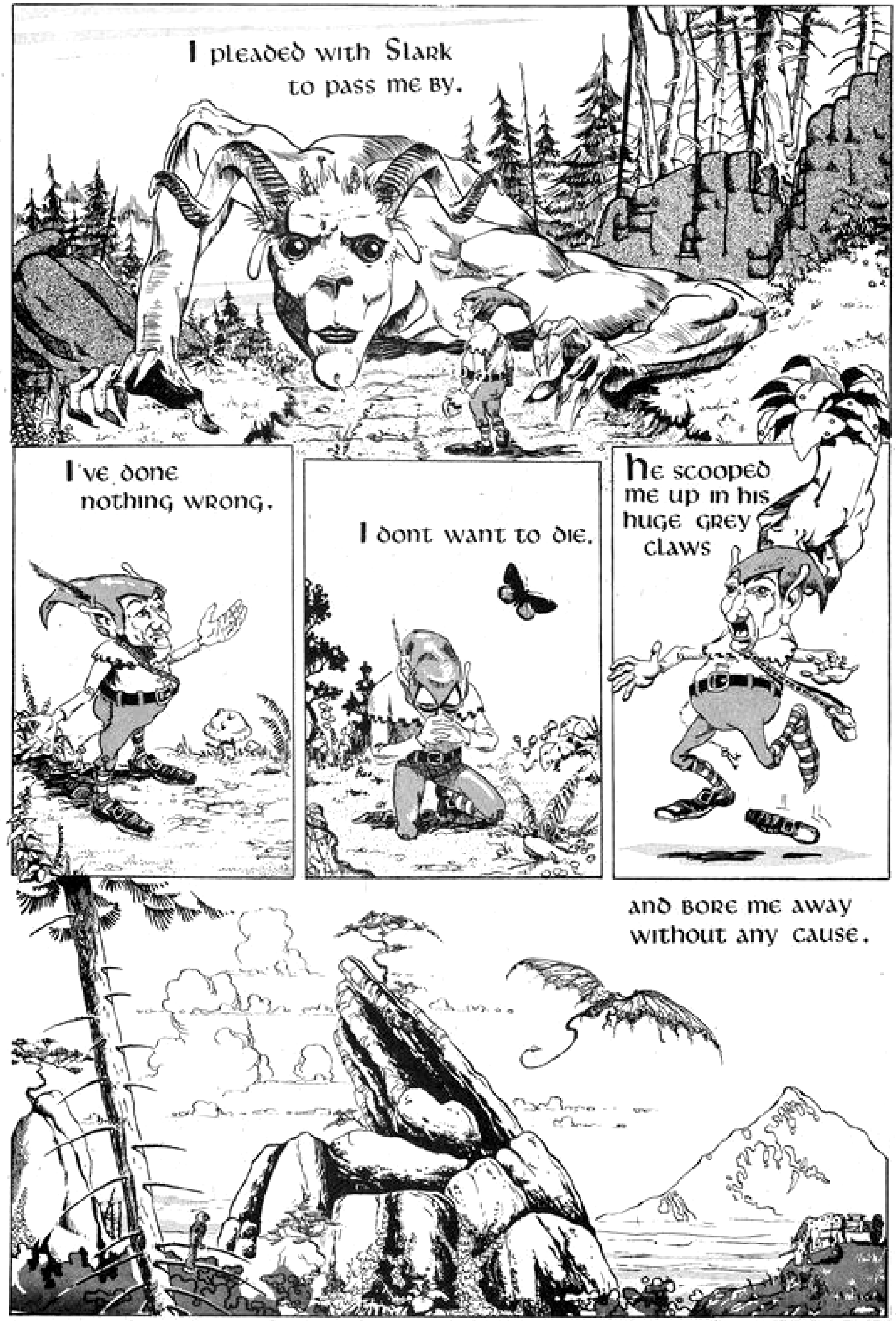
CEREBUS
THE AARDVARK

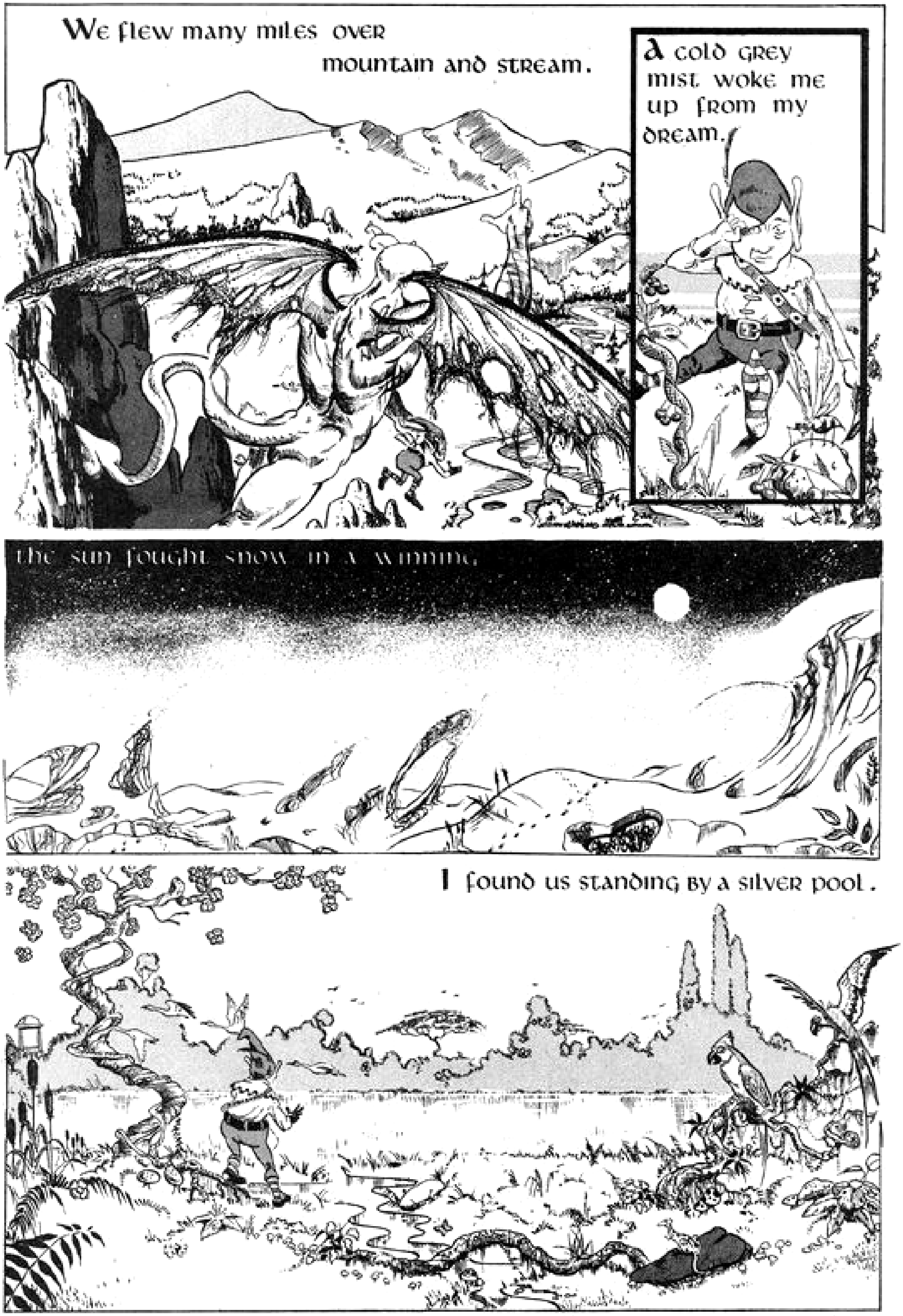
Photograph used in Kitchener-Waterloo Record in a story about forged Cerebus # 1's. That's an authentic one that I'm holding, by-the-way. Wave to Deni, behind the door. Hi, Deni.

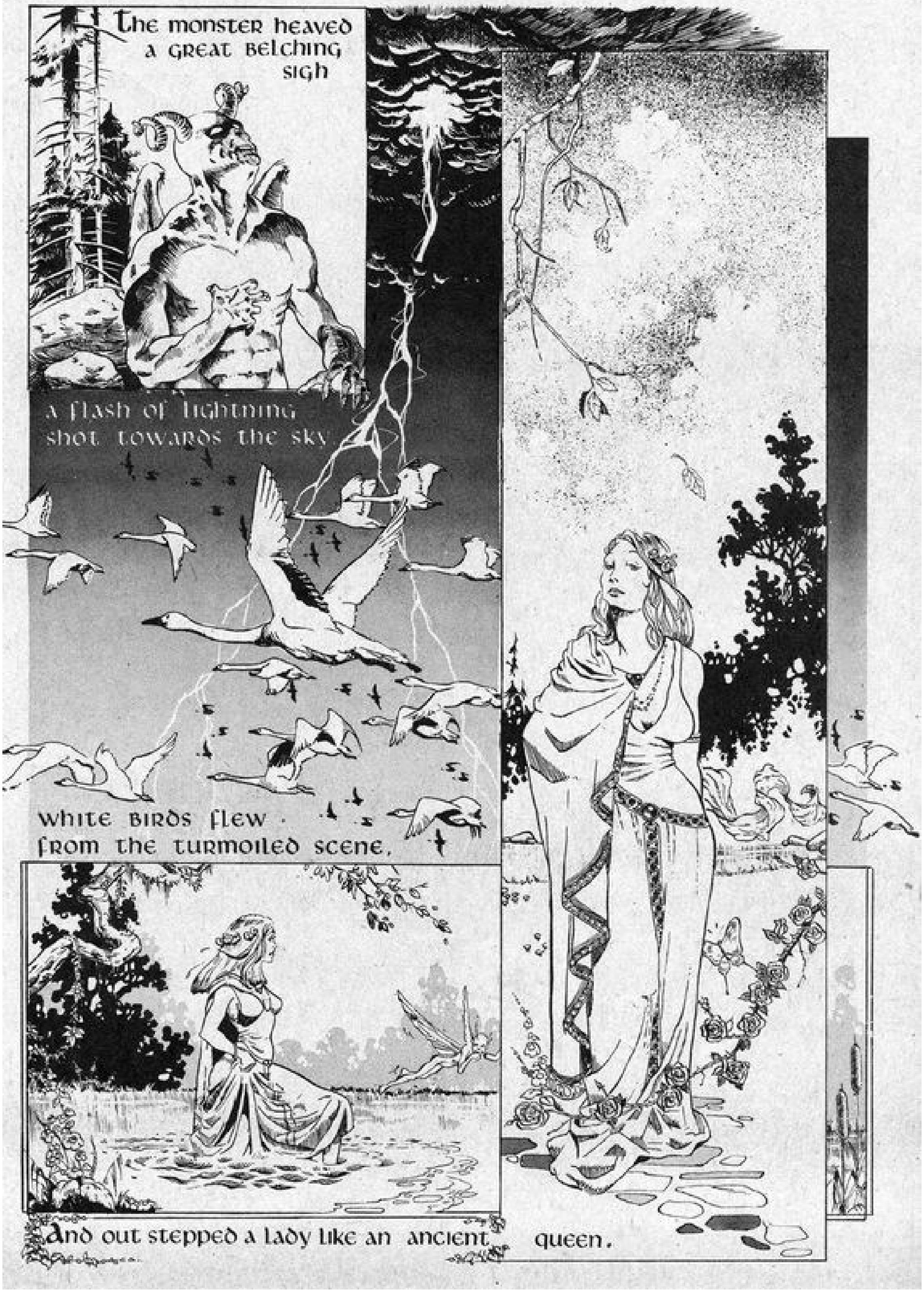
A UNIQUE STORY

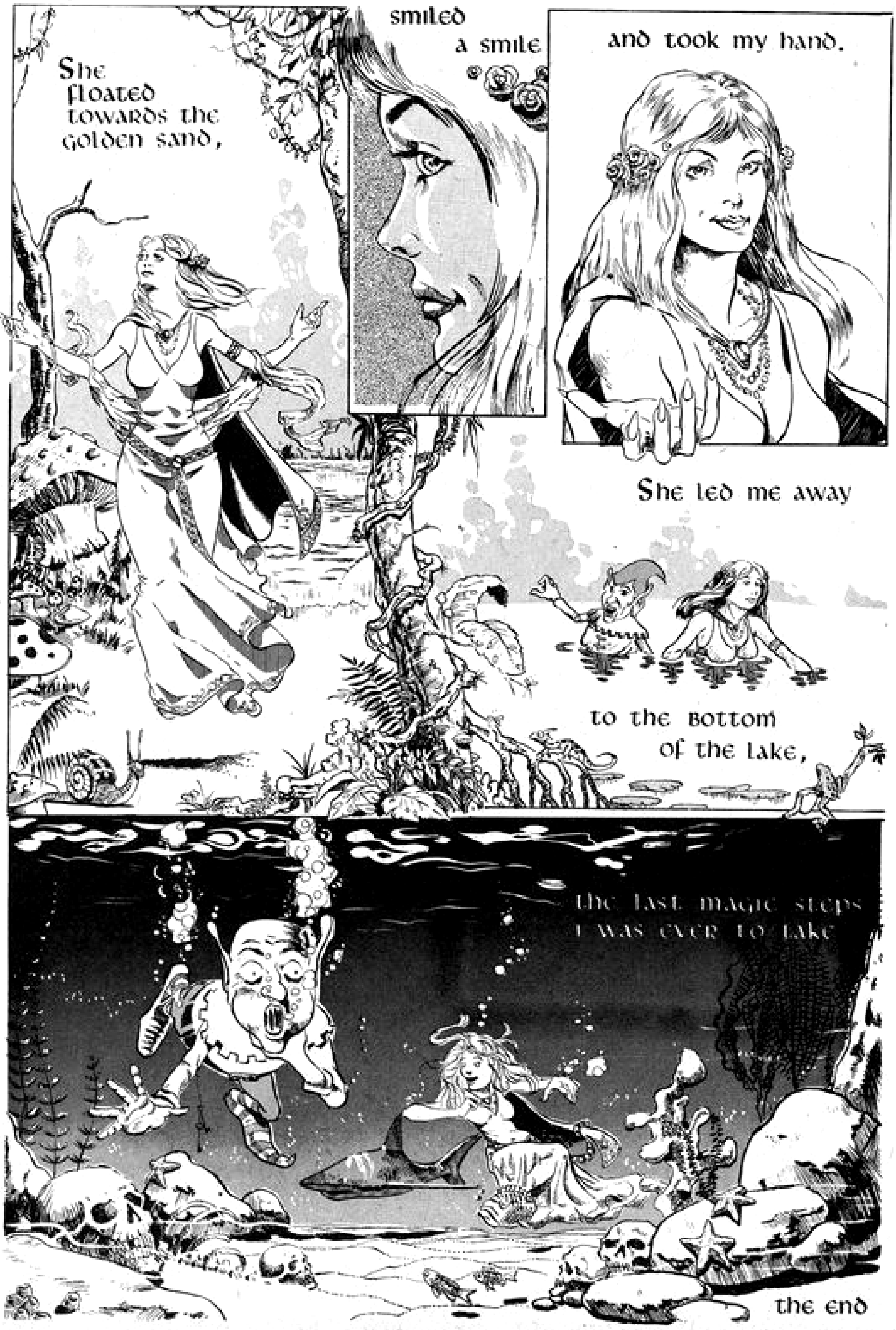

SLARK
adapted from the song by stackridge
Careering along in my creosote car, from Kebeeble to Kenn
© CONWAY 78
I didn't get very far.
The sky turned black and a dark cloud grew.
The monster Slark came into view.

TO RINOU


I pleaded with Slark to pass me by.
I've done nothing wrong.
I dont want to die.
He scooped me up in his huge grey claws
and bore me away without any cause.


We flew many miles over mountain and stream.
A cold grey mist woke me up from my dream.
the sun fought snow in a winning
I found us standing by a silver pool.


The monster heaved a great belching sigh
a flash of lightning shot towards the sky.
white birds flew from the turmoiled scene.
And out stepped a lady like an ancient queen.


She floated towards the golden sand,
smiled a smile
and took my hand.
She led me away
to the bottom of the lake,
the last magic steps I was ever to take
the end

ISSN 0712-7774

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

THE LOWE
DOCKS FEST
NELS
GRACI
DISTR
T'AGAT
goodabbey

40
JUL

$1.50

Photo by William C. Johnson

A Note from the Publisher

The last month has been hectic, but really fun and interesting for me. As you can see from the back cover, Dave and I will be going on tour in October. This idea is a brainstorm of Dave's. He has always been frustrated about the lack of time to sit and talk to Cerebus readers at conventions. You can't really carry on a conversation and draw at the same time. Not if you want to pay attention to both things. Also, not everyone who reads Cerebus is likely to write to us and tell us what they think about it. Somehow, there had to be a way to get to the different areas that Cerebus is sold in and talk to the people about what they read and what they would like to see in the book. (After all - the "High Society" story is coming to a close in about ten issues, so it helps to find out what people are thinking about it.)

Planning the tour was easier, but at the same time more complicated, than I had thought it would be. Many of the shop owners were enthusiastic about us coming when I phoned them about the tour, which helped to make my job in this a lot easier.

There has been some apparent confusion about the relationship between Now and Then Books and Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc. I would like to point out that Harry Kremer is the owner of Now and Then Books, not Dave or me. It's just that Now and Then is the local comicshop for our area. Dave was a collector even before he began drawing, so he has known Harry for quite a long time. Naturally, Harry was the first person he went to when we decided to do Cerebus. I am hoping that this will clear up any confusion that may have remained about our relationship with Now and Then Books.

I believe that I have run out of time and space, so I will say so-long until next issue.

Oh - yes. For those of you who didn't notice . . . . our Unique Stories artist for this month is the incomparable Dave Sim. (Who?)

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 40 JULY 1982

Publisher
Deni Sim

Distributors:
Bud Plant Inc.
P.O. Box 1886
Grass Valley, CA
95945

Pacific Comics
P.O. Box 99217
San Diego, CA
92109

Glenwood Distribution
124 Vandalia St.
Collinsville, IL
62234

Capital City Distributors
2827 Perry Street
Madison, Wisconsin
53713

Diamond Comics
612-1/2 Edmunson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland
21228

Styx Comic Service
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R2W 3R6

Now & Then Books
103 Queen St. South
Kitchener, Ont.
N2G 1W1

Silver Snail
323 Queen St. W.
Toronto, Ontario

Titan Distributors
P.O. Box 250
London, E3 4R1
England

Cerebus Fan Club
c/o Fred Patten
11863 West Jefferson Blvd.
Culver City, California
90230
Membership ..... $8.00 per year

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Abraxas Studio
Richard Bruning
P.O. Box 1606
Madison, Wisconsin
53701

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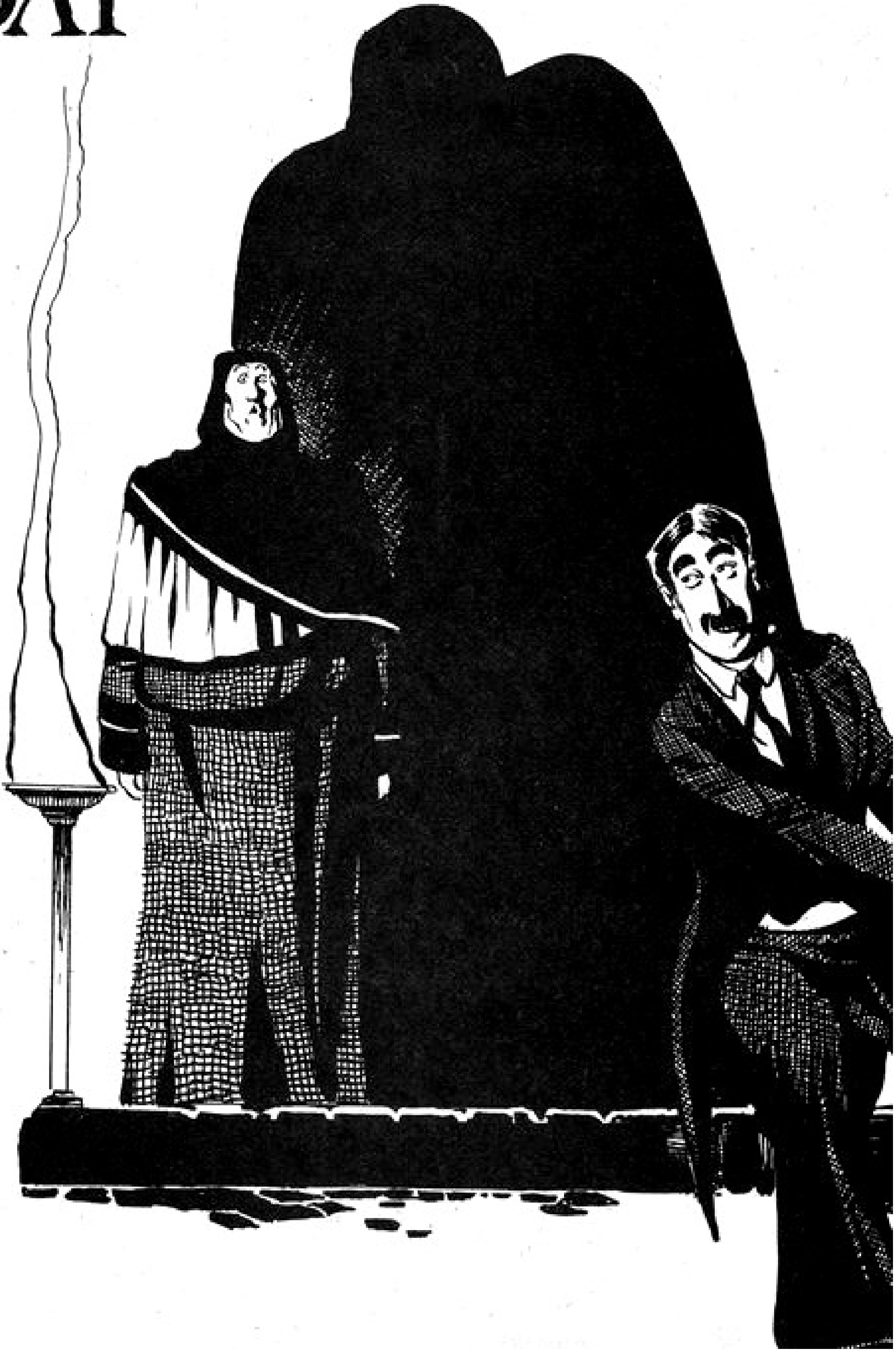
GOAT



the abbess: Welcome to Good Abbey "Lord" Julius . . . I would

Lord Julius: Would you mind lending a hand. I think he swallowed twenty pounds of ball bearings at the last stop.

the abbess: Blessed Mother of us All! A goat! A real goat.

Lord Julius: Yes Ma'am. Finest example of pure-bred one-hundred per-cent goat this side of the Kota mountains - if you don't include my uncle Seymour.

the abbess: Am I being led to understand, that this is your candidate for prime minister?

Lord Julius: My father used to say "Son, you can lead an abbess to understand, but you can't make her think."

the abbess: I am not interested in your father.

Lord Julius: Neither was my mother. Which makes me something of a mystery, doesn't it?

the abbess: Well . . . I . . .

Lord Julius: You're right. Let's cut out all this smart talk and get right to the dumb talk. The goat is willing to cut lest's interest payments in half.

the abbess: Why - that's wonderful!

Lord Julius: What's so wonderful about it? He wants to keep the other half for himself. Half for him, half for me, and you're the little abbess that cries down the lane.

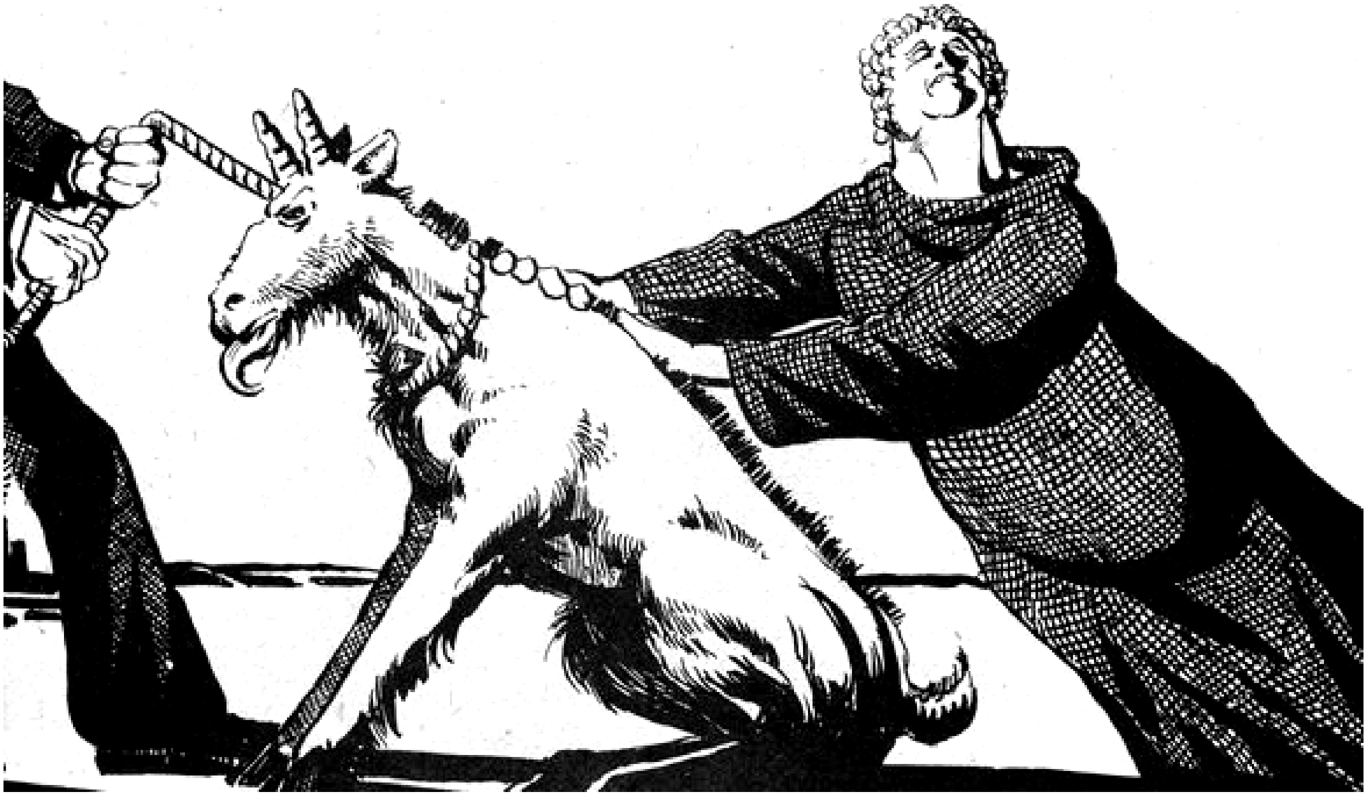
the abbess: I'm afraid I don't understand.

Lord Julius: Exactly my point. A goat walks in off the street and drains your treasury down to it's I.O.U.'s. A fine way to run a city-state. You'd better wake up and smell the goats or it's burlap soup for us all.

the abbess: Burlap soup?

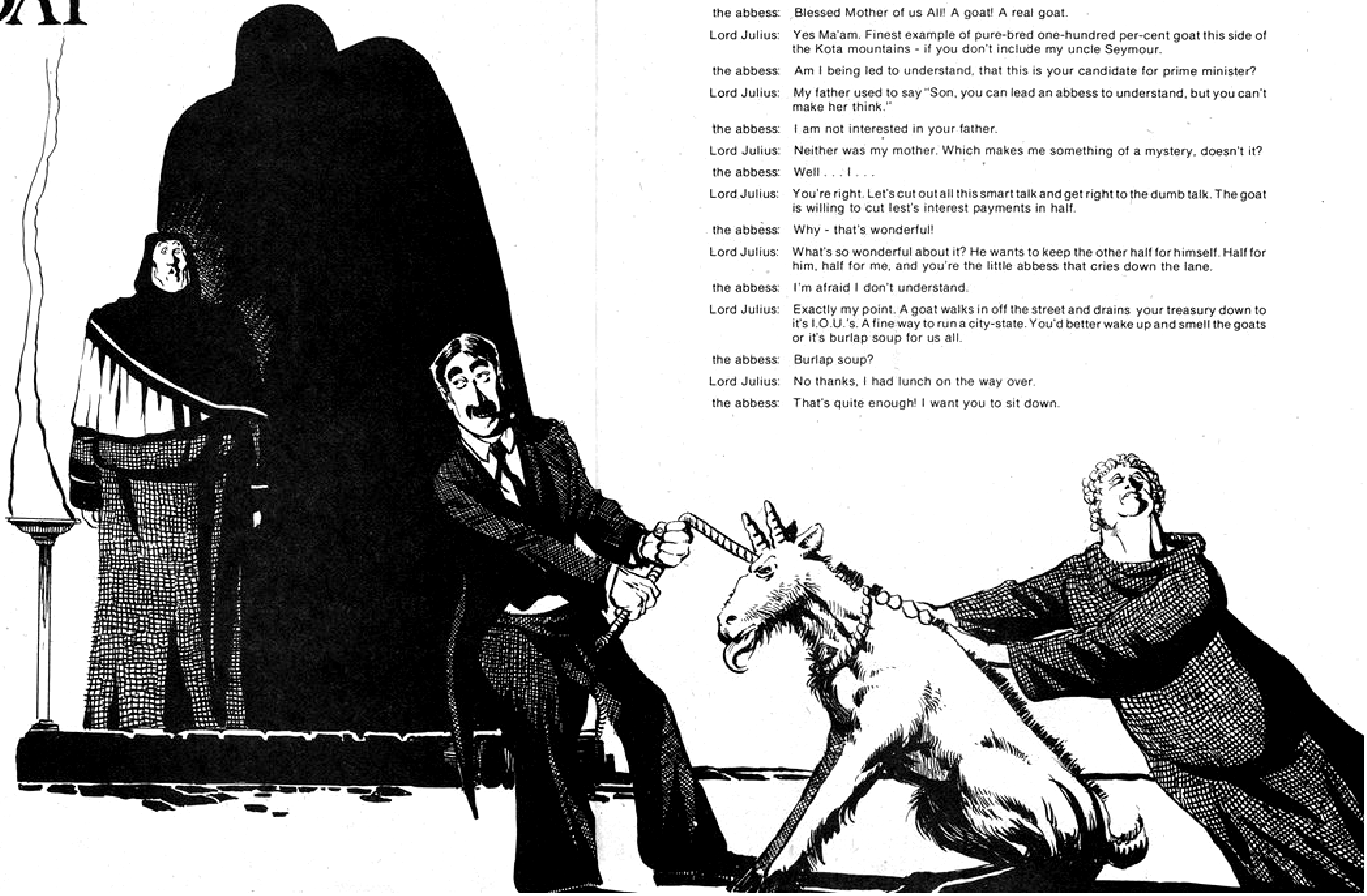
Lord Julius: No thanks, I had lunch on the way over.

the abbess: That's quite enough! I want you to sit down.



A UNIQUE STORY

GOAT



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the abbess: Burlap soup?

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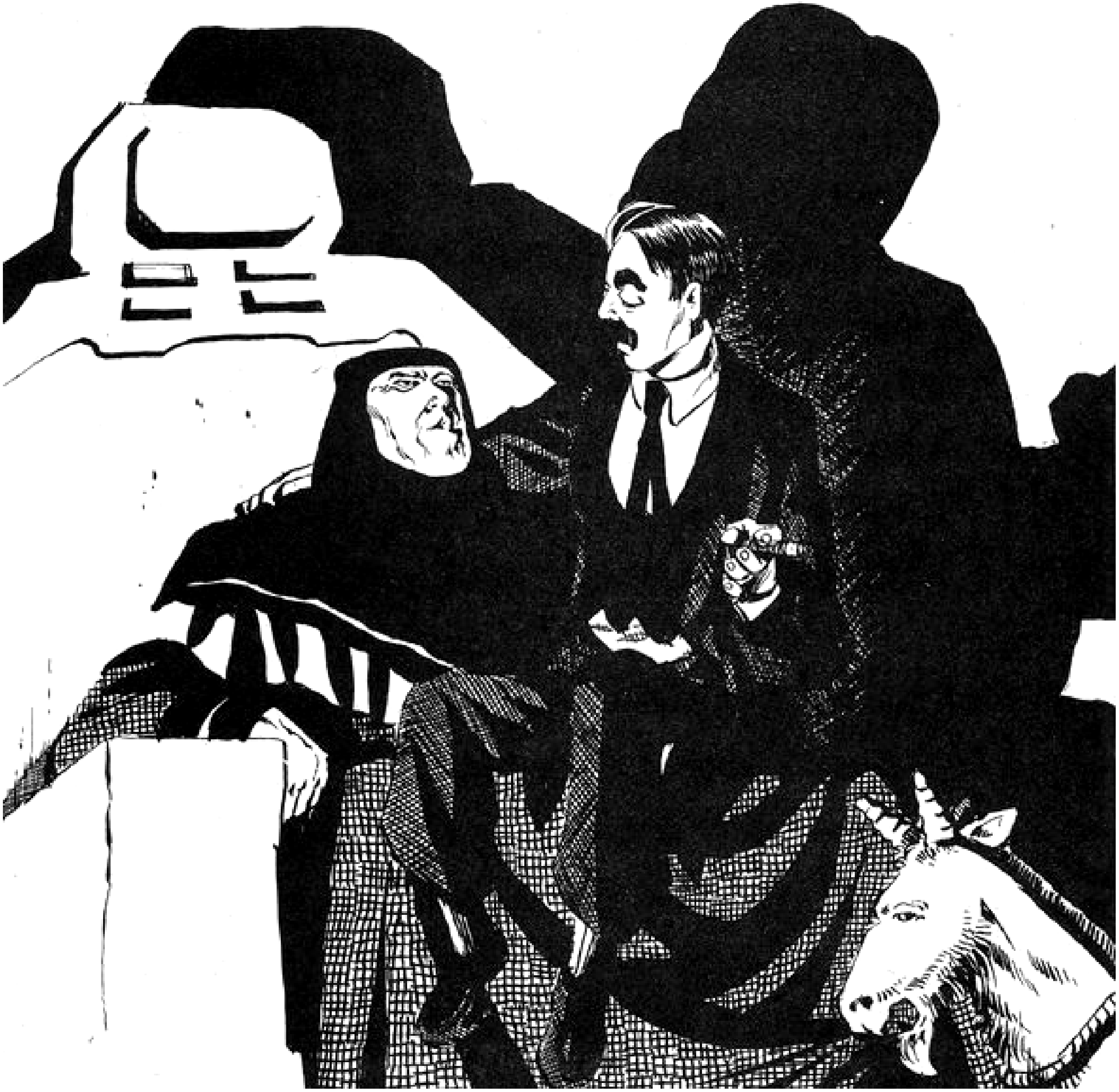
the abbess: That's quite enough! I want you to sit down.

Lord Julius: You win. How's this?

the abbess: I meant on the chair, not on me!

Lord Julius: Oh what's the use? I'm tired of pretending. Tired of the lies - the deceptions.

the abbess: Why - what do you mean?



Lord Julius: You're mine! All mine!

the abbess: Lord Julius!

Lord Julius: Your lips, your eyes, your one nostril that's bigger than the other.

the abbess: Lord Julius! Stop that this instant!

Lord Julius: Don't fight it - it's bigger than both of us. In your case that verges on the incredible.

the abbess: You're insane!

Lord Julius: Mad with passion! I want to nibble your warts.

the abbess: Lord Julius! Stop! Your goat is eating my habit.

Lord Julius: I'll say.

the abbess: Lord Julius!

Lord Julius: Well I'll be. My goat really **is** eating your habit.

the abbess: LEAVE! NOW! BOTH OF YOU!

Lord Julius: Don't say a word. I want to remember you this way - The firelight dancing on your mustache hairs.

the abbess: OUT! OUT!

transcript copy to Her worship Cirin of Upper Felda.
Astoria Duchess of Parmoc

transcript copy to the Abbess of Good Abbey burned as requested.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni

Imagine the scene; a weary traveller, covered in coats and scarves, trudging through snow and ice, lashed with rain and frozen solid. Eventually, He reaches his destination: the Cardiff Science Fiction and Comic Shop. Overcome with emotion he rushes in and with tears in his eyes he clutches the latest Cerebus to his chest. Bliss.

Unfortunately, all you **can** do is imagine it, cos THEY AIN'T GOT IT !!!

A few years ago, while on holiday to New York, I picked up a copy of Cerebus #7 and have been trying ever since to obtain more issues, but with little success. (It costs me 10 - 20 Dollars - to travel up to London, and I think Forbidden Planet is the only shop that stocks it.)

Still hope was just around the corner; five months ago my local comic shop (a small once-weekly affair - but resplendant with friendly owners and a large clientel) announced that Cerebus had been ordered and would arrive, on a regular basis very soon. **Last week** the first batch arrived. Not the current #38, but the numbers 26, 28 and 30. The shop owner explained apologetically that these had been sent by Titan in lieu of new issues, for prices he never expected to pay: £1.75 - $3.50 each! Because of this he expressed doubts as to whether he would stock Cerebus again.

Now I may have got my facts muddled somewhere along the line - but I think not. Still, it would do no harm to check up on Titan (we still have no new Cerebus - after five months of waiting).

The five issues I have to date have been consistently good (all of which feature either Elrod or Moonroach - both excellent satires) and who knows, maybe one of these days you may even get close to approaching the brilliance of MacGregor and Russells' Killraven (Praise indeed!!)

David A. Roach
36 Lakeside Drive
Lakeside, Cardiff, Wales, G.B.

Is there anybody out there who can help these poor Brits; most especially one with a great Cerebus fan name like David A Roach? Varkies, ho! (aside from Deni . . . I have spoken to the folks at Titan to find out what was the problem. It turns out that a lot of it could be solved by re-shuffling the paper-work here in Canada. I hope that by issue #42 or so things will be running smoothly.)

Dear Dave

Thanks for bringing some much needed joy into exam week. Cerebus #37 was wonderful!! "It's Showtime" ranks as one of my all-time favorite comic stories. I'll never forget the man represen' daddocks.

Once again, thanks for a little joy in a ballbuster week, I will never forget you for it!

Edward Homa, Jr.
9 North Avon Drive
Claymont, DE 19703

You say that now, but what about twenty-three years from now? Never is a long time to forget (or something like that.)

Dear Dave and Deni

Thank you once again for producing this comic. It's really great, I enjoy it a lot, you do a fine job, etc. etc. (Do you ever get tired of hearing all this?)

Thirty-seven followed in your great tradition: slow pacing, clever revelation, high humour, intriguing adventure. I loved how you slipped that bombshell about Astoria and Julius on the Earth-Pig's head. The bit about the Elrod bunnies was priceless. I laughed for a long time over that one.

Cerebus' convention experience couldn't be based on any of your own, could it have been, Dave? The scene with the two, ah, "people", on pages 12 and 13 seemed to show an absolutely masterful grasp of that type of convention boor. Perhaps you've met that type of of individual? Here's where the numbered questions start:

1. The votes that Astoria was frantically counting on page nine: were they for Cerebus or Elrod?
2. Where is the rest of MacMufin's pigt army?
3. Has Bran been following Cerebus around since issue 5?
4. What happened to Jaka's first person speaking habits?
5. Is the Elf gone for good?
6. When will we see Weisshaupt again?
7. When is Mind Game III coming?

Okay, enough about that. Thanks, very humbly, for bringing all this enjoyment into my life. I loved that last page drawing! How-ah say-how did you **know** that you and Mr. Day are my two fave comic artists? Shang and Cerebus together -- howzabout a full-length adventure?

One last comment: You can't fool me! The fact that you've manipulated your readership into seeing Estarcion through Cerebus' eyes isn't blinding me! Your readership seems to think that Bran MacMufin is crazy, just because Cerebus does. But, in case you haven't noticed, most of MacMufin's comments have been dead on target. Due to his rather cryptic comments this issue, I can conclude that something in Cerebus' future -- probably around issue 290 -- Cerebus will be Prime Minister of Iest!

After all, when this "High Society" story is over and Cerebus hits the road again, it should be useful to have someone who's the second-best swordsman in the world willing to obey your every whim.

Again, thank you.

Brian Doherty
10140-7 Arrowhead Dr. E.
Jacksonville, Florida 32217

1. *For Cerebus*
2. *Still underground in the Red Marches.*
3. *No, but he had spies who kept track of the Earth-pig.*
4. *The was a device she used to blend into the barbaric environment of Lower Iest and which she dropped when she got to know Cerebus better.*
5. *See #39 (Nyah nyah).*
6. *When I bring him back.*
7. ***Possibly** before the end of "High Society".*

Dear Dave and Deni

. . . Day Two was a vast improvement over last issue. I find it hard to say why, as it is something intangible, but the difference

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

is there. I mean, I could point out what I liked about the book (just about everything), but I'm sure that other letter-writers will bring out the strong points more eloquently than I.

On the other hand, I could point at the faults. That's simple - I didn't care for a few of the faces. Period.

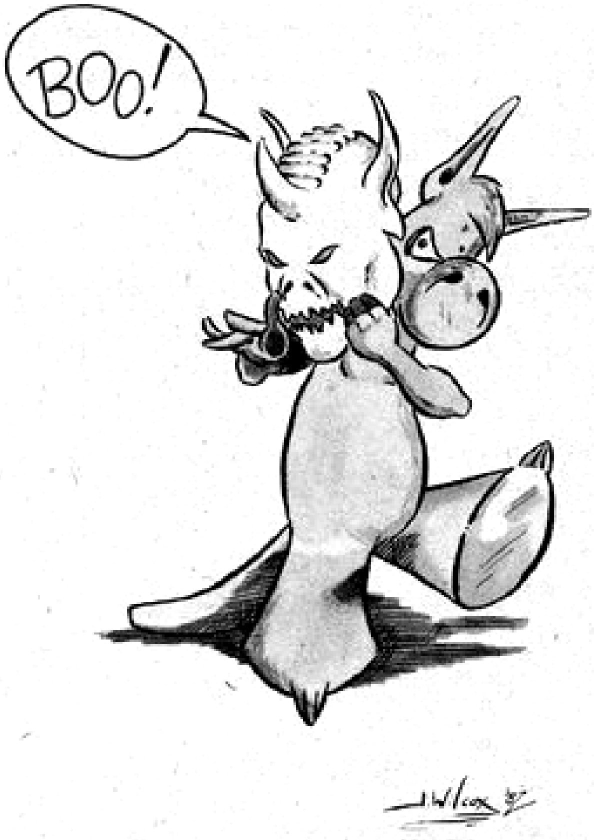
Sorry, but that's about it. I really enjoyed #38, but I don't know what to say about it. Fair enough?

Would it help if I said that I'm really looking forward to the next issue?

Really!!

John A. Wilcox
40 Hales Court
Westport, CT. 06880

This is in answer to all those letters from the members of the John A. Wilcox fan club who wanted to know when we were going to print our next John A. Wilcox fan letter so they could reserve extra copies ahead of time. This issue, okay?



S'ym (from X-men #160) cartoon #2 this time by John (give me an "a") Wilcox. Stay tuned for #3.

Dear Dave Sim

I didn't cry, but it was beautifully done. The smartest of men (and wimmin and aardvarks, yeah, yeah, too) will oft lead themselves astray. (But they can return to their senses, can't they? Maybe in time, maybe not, but they can, can't they?)

You broke my heart. Thank you.

P.S. I'm female.

P.P.S. Astoria's fantastic, particularly the no-nonsense way you draw her. I mean, there's the elf for people who have to have that sort of thing.

P.P.S. Your lesson in economics was priceless. "Never borrow more than you can pay the interest on." It's the reality of that remark that gives it it's bite.

Micky (Michelle) DuPree
41 Burnside #2
Somerville, MA 02144

What do you want to bet this is from a male fan who figured he could get a letter published by signing a female name. It worked, anyway.

Dear Dave and Deni

Hi. It's me again - and just when you thought it was safe to open the mail! I've sent along a couple of copies of CCC #2, complete with the promised CEREBUS article - though not in the format I had originally planned. The first article was on Dave's art style, but it was boring as hell, so I trashed it and did this one. There's also a capsule review of CEREBUS #36 in there somewhere.

What do you think of my first inking jobs ("Hell's Angel Harvey" and the third Harvey the Trout strip?) Can I start inking backgrounds in CEREBUS ? Panel borders? Page numbers? Oh well.

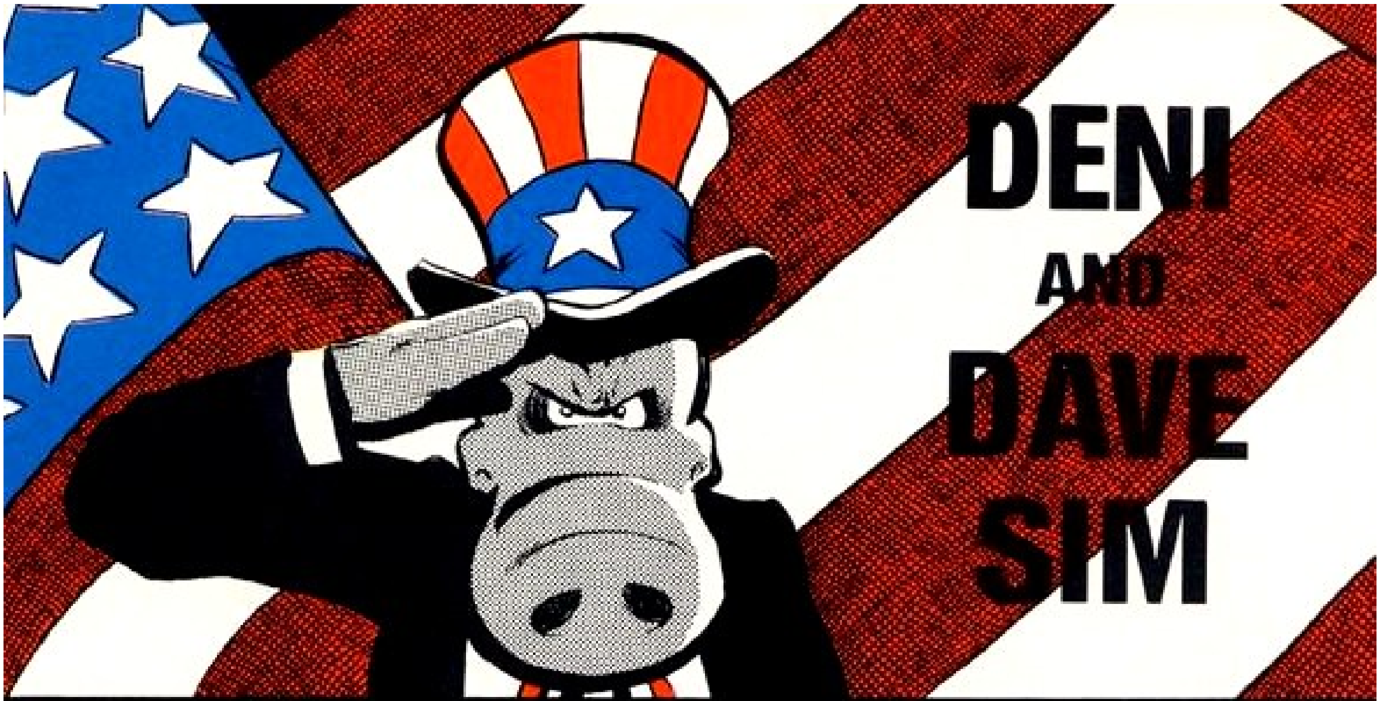
Deni - thanks for your aside in your editorial. Aside from providing me with a lift of spirits (I saw it after spending five consecutive hours in a copy store making the first print run of the magazine and trucking a pile of them up to Comics & Comix), it provided several laughs the next Sunday when I was working behind the counter: "Are you Matt Denn? **The** Matt Denn from CEREBUS?!?"

What is this boycott of Matt Denn on the letters page? Granted, I'm not being greedy, but CEREBUS is the only magazine that I've ever written a favorable letter to without having it printed! Sure . . . R. Fiore, Stu Potts, David Stallman - is it a conspiracy against small press publishers? Or, hey, need another Mike Bannon? **No problem!** Can Cerebus sky-dive while chewing petrified fruit chews? (Note: the preceding has been a joke. Just in case you weren't sure.)

I'd love to know what you think of this issue if you have the time to dash off another letter. Seeing that I'm running out of space, I suppose it's time to say goodbye. Goodbye.

Matt Denn
611 Grizzly Peak Blvd.
Berkeley, CA 94708

I couldn't remember why I boycotted you from the letters page, Matt. Maybe you should've sent a Mike Bannon joke with your first letter.



FIRST AMERICAN TOUR 1982

Oct. 1 - Cambridge, MA
"Superhero Universe"
1105 Massachusetts Ave.

Oct. 2 - New York City, NY
11:30 - 3:00
"Westside Comics"
107 W. 86th St.

3:30 - 7:30
"Comic Art Gallery"
351 E. 82nd St.

Oct. 7 - Philadelphia, PA
"Fat Jack's"
2008 Sanson St.

Oct. 8 - Baltimore, MD
"Geppi's Comic World"
612½ Edmunson Ave.

Oct. 9 - Silver Springs, MD
"Geppi's Comic World"
8305 Fenton St.

Oct. 12 - Louisville, KY
"The Great Escape"
2433 Bardstown Rd.

Oct. 13 - Richmond VA
"Nostalgia Plus"
5606 Patterson Ave.

Oct. 14 - Atlanta, GA
"The Book Nook"
3342 Clairmont Rd. N.E.

Oct. 15 - Largo, FL
"Geppi's Comic World"
2226 East Bay Drive

Oct. 16 - Richardson, TX
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
"Remember When"
581 W. Campbell #119

Oct. 16 - Fort Worth, TX
3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
"Fantastic Worlds"
816A Camp Bowie Blvd.

Oct. 16 - Arlington, TX
7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
"Collector's Corner"
Forum 303, Shopping Mall

Oct. 17 - Dallas, TX
"Remember When"
2431 Valwood Parkway

Oct. 21 - Berkeley, CA
"Comics and Comix"
2461 Telegraph Ave.

Oct. 22 - Palo Alto, CA
"Comics and Comix"
515 Cowper St.

Oct. 24 - Sacramento, CA
"Comics and Comix"
6135 Sunrise Blvd., Citrus Heights

Oct. 26 - Santa Barbara, CA
"Andromeda"

Oct. 28 - San Diego, CA
"Comic Kingdom"
1629 University Ave.

Oct. 29 - Long Beach, CA
"Hi De Ho Comics"
2142 E. 4th Street

Oct. 31 - Santa Monica, CA.
"Hi De Ho Comics"
1413 5th Street

Nov. 5 - Boulder, CO
"Mile High Comics"
1717 Pearl

Nov. 6 - Denver, CO
10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
"Mile High Comics"
2901 E. Colfax

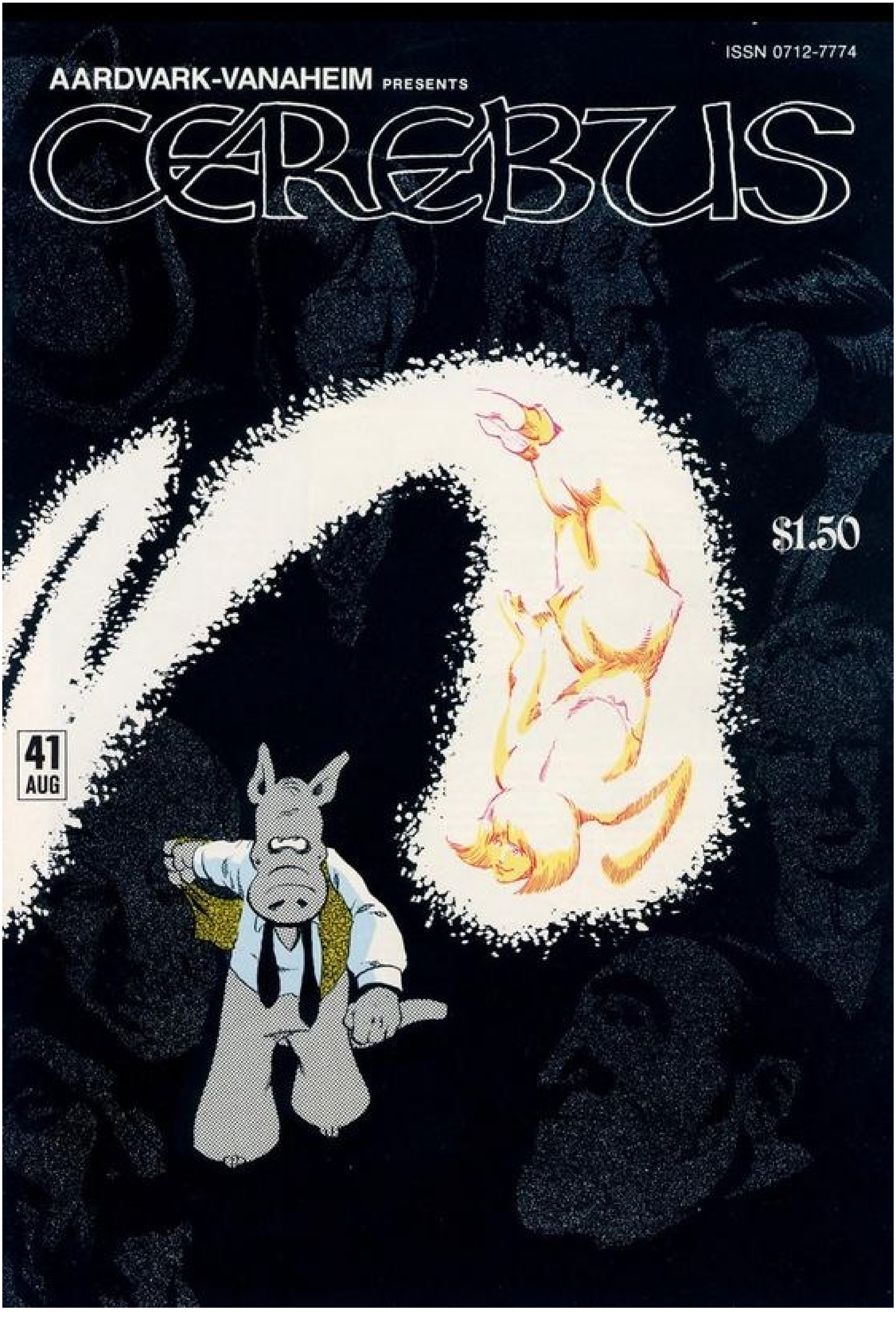
2:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.
"Mile High Comics"
308 S. Broadway

Nov. 7 - Colorado Springs, CO
"Mile High Comics"
220 N. Tejon

ISSN 0712-7774

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS



A Note from the Publisher

I'd like to start this off with a few notes concerning our upcoming U.S. Tour. We have received some letters in the mail from people who either want their Cerebus #1's authenticated (which Dave will be happy to do for you via the mail) or are saying that they are having a bit of trouble selling or trading their Cerebus #1's, because some folks aren't sure that they want to take the chance on buying what may turn out to be a counterfeit copy. If Dave and I happen to be coming to your area this fall -we would be quite happy to authenticate your book for you (or let you know if it turns out to be a counterfeit one). It is quite easy for Dave to tell the two apart, and we are in fact, considering bringing a copy of the counterfeit one and a genuine one with us, so our readers can see the difference with their own eyes. While I am on the subject of the counterfeit books, I would like to make a few points clear. First of all -- there is one sure-fire way to tell the difference between the two books. If you open the book to the inside cover (front or back, it doesn't matter which), you will see one of two things. If it's a nice glossy black -- you have a counterfeit book. If the blacks are dull, with a kind of greyish tinge to them, then you have the original book. There are no exceptions to this rule! We could not afford to buy paper that was varnished on two sides at the time we started Cerebus -- even though this is almost a standard for comic books, so the difference is quite obvious. There are also some rumors going around that some of the counterfeits that are showing up are not counterfeits at all, but that a box of Cerebus #1's had been stored away in someone's warehouse and "just happened" to show up at the same time that the counterfeits showed up. I have checked this possibility out quite thoroughly and have found no basis for this theory. I know where **all two thousand** copies went, they are all accounted for within our first year of publishing. This isn't that unusual with so small a print run. There are no 'miracle finds' lying around, as much as we understand people wanting to believe that this is so. In fact, I would like to announce here that Dave and I have decided that we have been taking this counterfeit thing a little too lightly. Aardvark-Vanaheim is now offering a reward of $1000.00 (this is in addition to the $1000.00 reward being offered by the Distributors Association) for anyone who gives us information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for this. We have been approached by an American copyright lawyer who told us some things concerning U.S. copyright laws that we were not aware of. This lawyer in now looking into this matter for us. I think that the time has come for us to get serious about this.

On to more pleasant news. The response to our present U.S. Tour has been so great that I am asking those shops who would be interested in participating in a possible future tour to send me a note saying so, along with either a business card or something that had **all** the pertinent information on it. This includes the name of the shop, it's address, phone number, and who I contact if I should start setting things up. Needless to say, we can fit no more shops into our present tour.

For those who didn't catch the information in an earlier editorial, Barry Windsor-Smith **will not be** doing the cover to Swords IV (which is at the printers at this time). We will be talking to Barry in the future about doing something, it just isn't possible for him right now.

(A bit of news concerning Unique Stories . . . .)

Due to the fact that we have gotten so much mail on Bill Loebs "Welcome to Heaven, Dr. Franklin", we will be doing more stuff with Bill in the near future. Besides another story for Unique, we are considering a six-part mini-series by Bill to come out on a bi-monthly basis as a continuing story.

What do you think? If you would like to see this, I'd really like to hear from you. It also wouldn't hurt to let your local comic shop know, either. (It always helps if the distributors think they can sell it). Also -- for those of you who are asking, 'What ever happened to Arn Saba's Neil the Horse?' I can tell you, now. Arn has moved from Toronto to Los Angeles, where he is hoping to get together some work for Aardvark-Vanaheim with the help of some generous California friends where he is staying. The Neil the Horse strip (as seen in this issue) is the first of two or possibly three to come out by Arn for Unique Stories. He is also working on a 60 - 80 page collection of Neil the Horse, which we hope will be out in December or January. (Please don't hold me to this, however, as even Arn isn't sure if he can get it done that quickly.) If you would like to see more of Arn, you can let him know by letting me know. Another artist soon to join the ranks of Aardvark-Vanaheim's growing family is Michael Gilbert. Michael is currently working on a 60-page book entitled "Strange Brew" which we hope will be coming out soon. Michael, who is best known for his 'Spirit' parody "The Wraith", has been working on this book for some while and we are now at the stage where we will be approaching distributors for orders. Keep your eyes open as his work will be appearing in Unique Stories in a short while and I am sure that Michael's work will be highly appreciated by those of you who enjoy the humour in Cerebus.

As my last piece of news, there is a radio station in Minneapolis, Minnesota (KSAI, 90.3 FM) which will be doing radio show adaptations of Cerebus on their Tuesday evening program, "Shockwave", which airs between six and seven p.m. The first show, an adaptation of Cerebus #1, (they are adapting the story issue by issue), will be on the air Tuesday, August 31st, with each show on successive Tuesday nights. They will be doing the following issues . . . September 7th, Issue Two and September 14th, Issue Three, etc. etc. Dave and I have received a cassette of the first show, and are delighted with the end results. It has a real professional sound to it and the people who are doing it are real fans of the book - so the enjoyment shows through. If you are in the Minneapolis area, I urge you to take the time to listen to this show. If you enjoy it, write and tell them so. If they can show that there is sufficient interest, they are going to try to get a grant to continue the adaptations. We are thinking we might see about producing these shows into 3 or 4 issue one-hour long tapes that we could make available to those who aren't in the Minneapolis area. Any reaction to this idea, pro or con, would be appreciated by Dave and I.

I think that I had best cut off at this point. My writer's cramp will be showing up in full force if I make this kind of length a habit. This has got to be the longest letter I've written to you yet. But then again, can I help it if so much is going on? I will try to keep you all informed as things progress. Until next issue!

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL 1 NO. 41 AUGUST 1982

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Deni Sim

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San Diego, CA 92109

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c/o Fred Patten
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P.O. Box 1606
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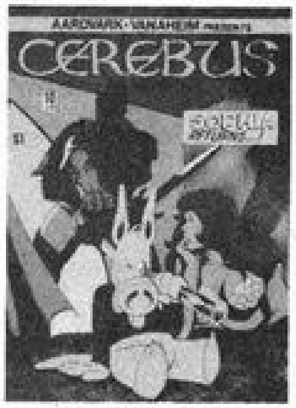

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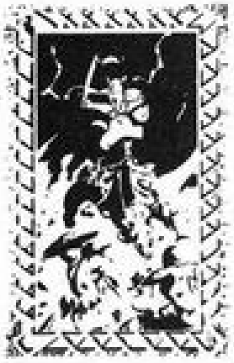

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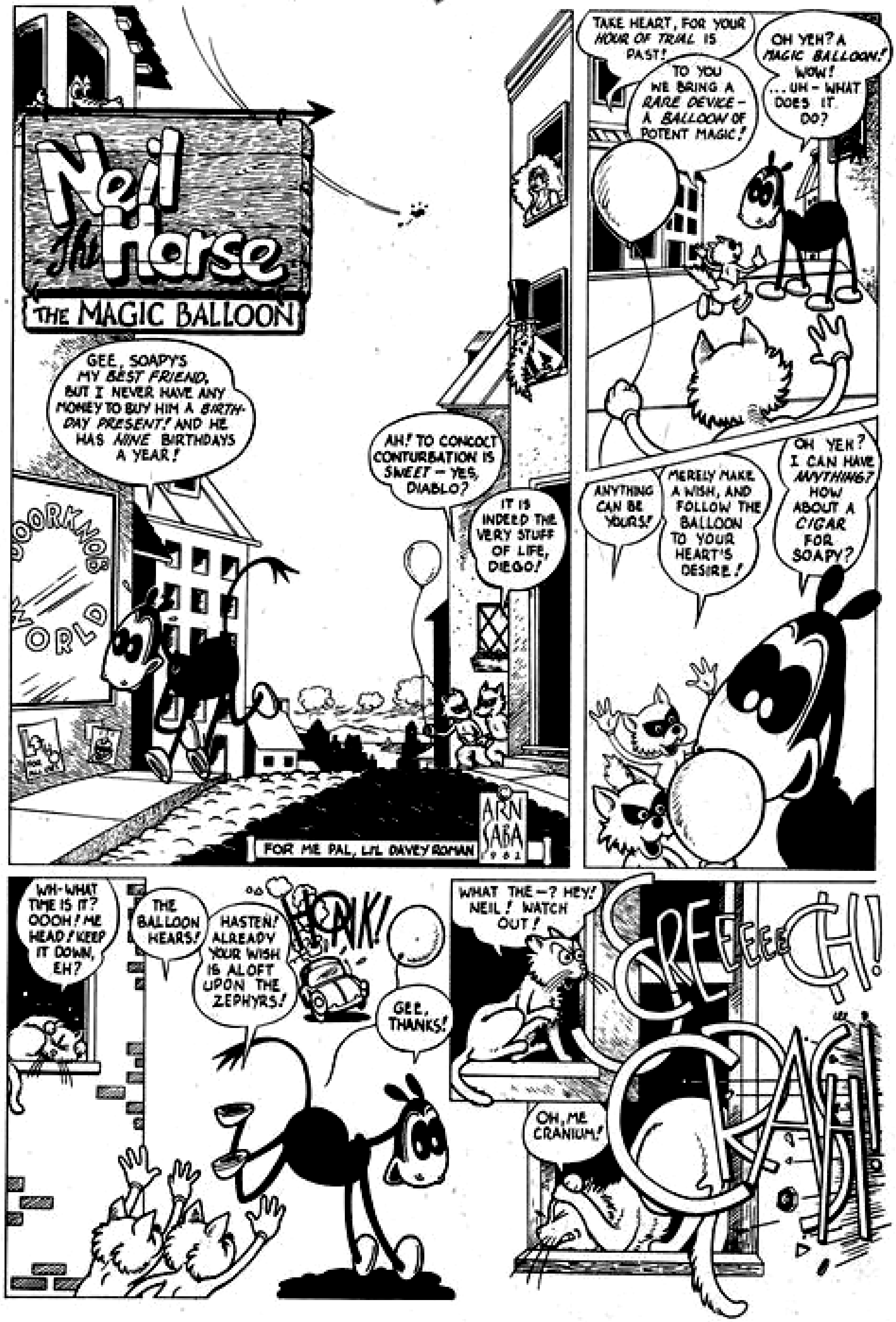
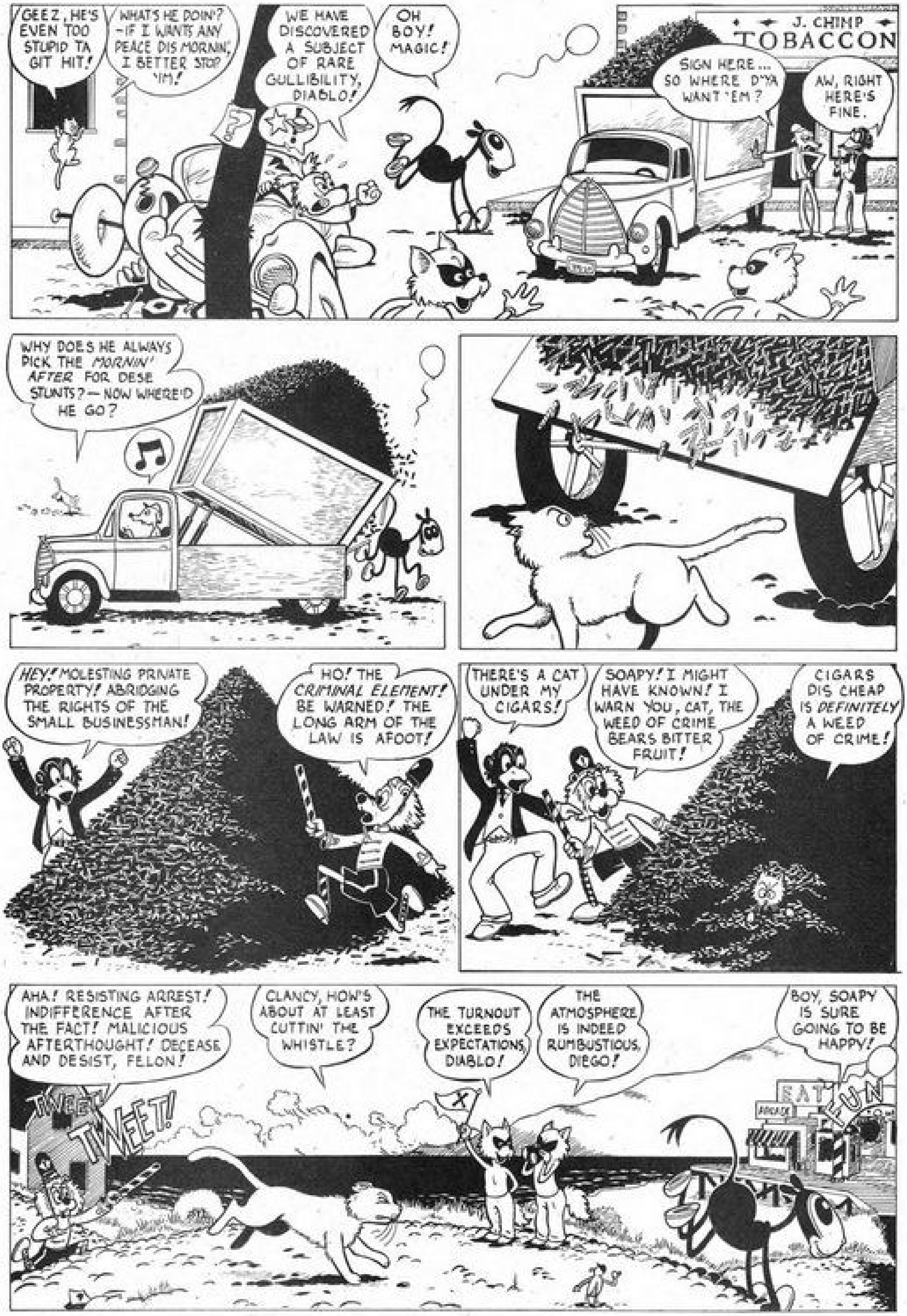
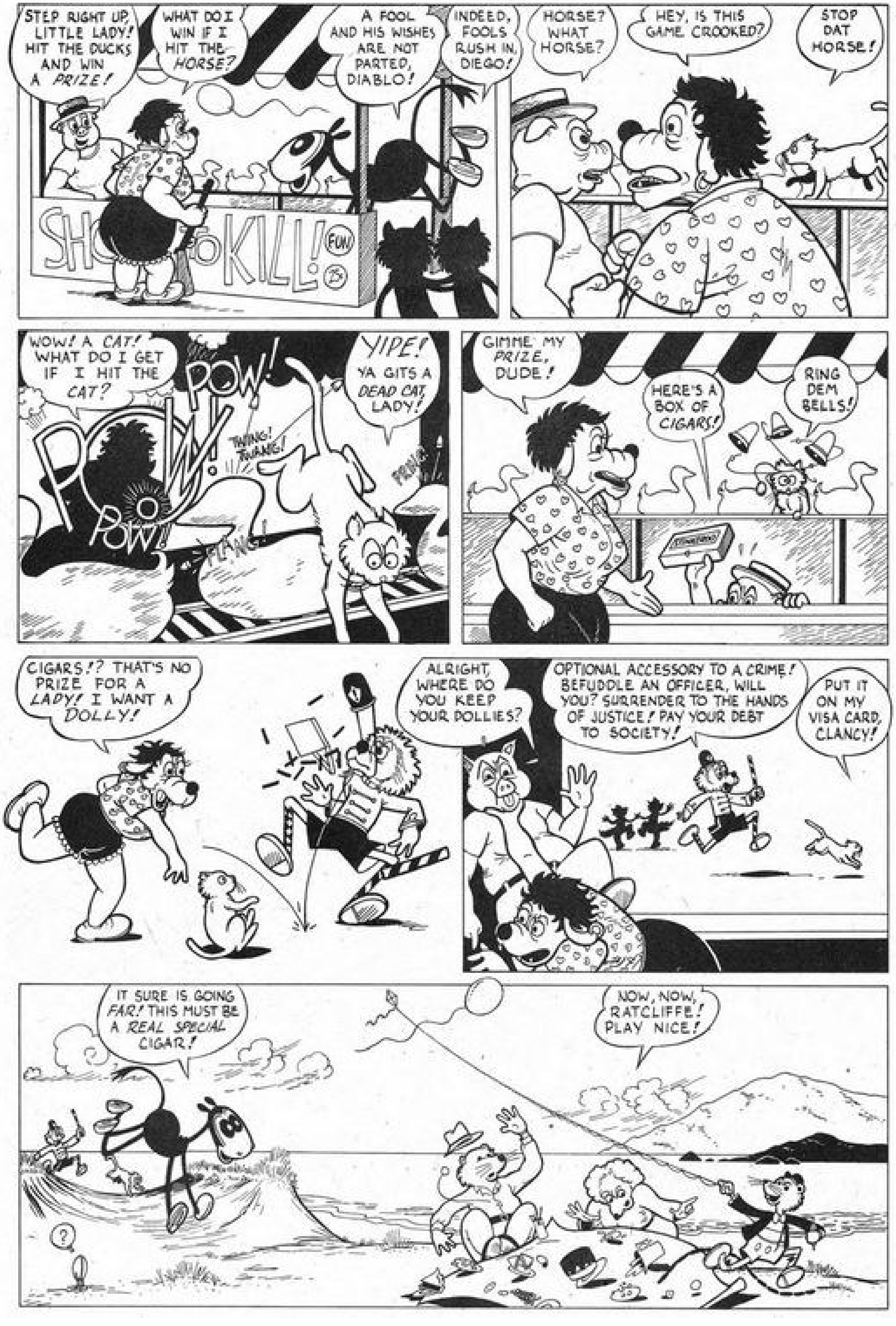
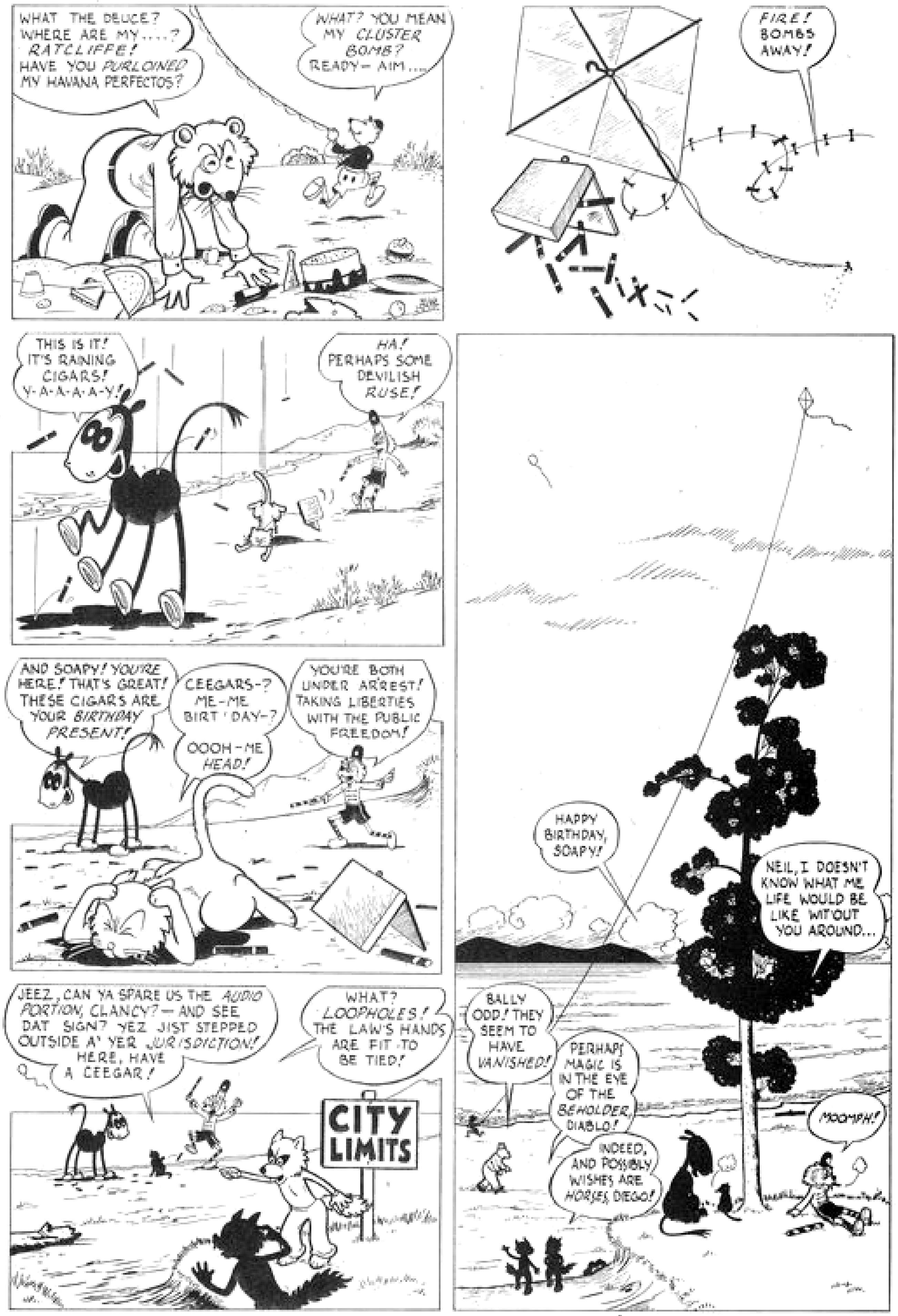
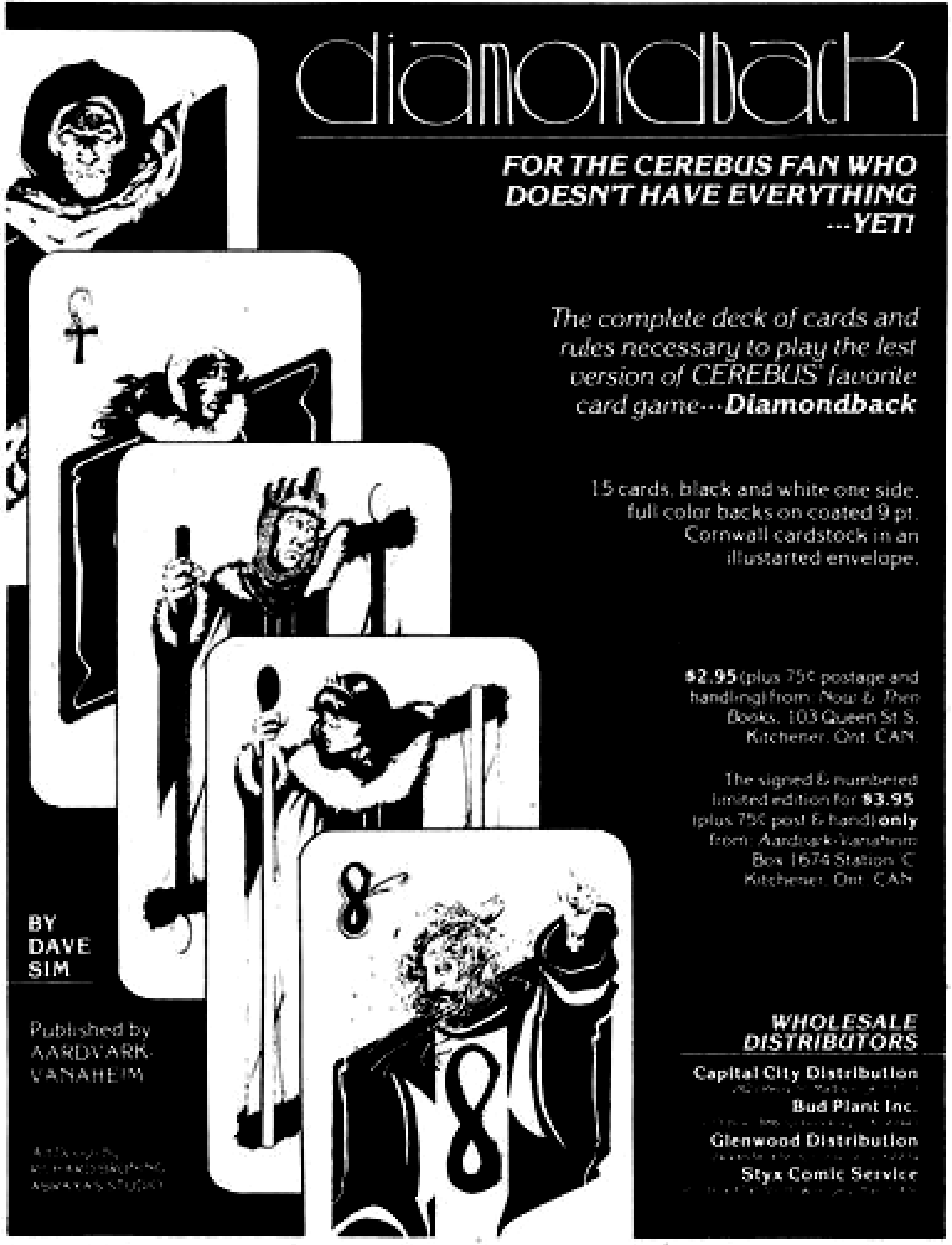

Neil the Horse
THE MAGIC BALLOON
GEE, SOAPY'S MY BEST FRIEND, BUT I NEVER HAVE ANY MONEY TO BUY HIM A BIRTHDAY PRESENT! AND HE HAS NINE BIRTHDAYS A YEAR!
DOORKNOB WORLD
AH! TO CONCOCT CONTURBATION IS SWEET — YES, DIABLO?
IT IS INDEED THE VERY STUFF OF LIFE, DIEGO!
FOR ME PAL, LI'L DAVEY ROMAN
ARN SABA 981
TAKE HEART, FOR YOUR HOUR OF TRIAL IS PAST!
TO YOU WE BRING A RARE DEVICE — A BALLOON OF POTENT MAGIC!
OH YEH? A MAGIC BALLOON! WOW! ...UH - WHAT DOES IT DO?
ANYTHING CAN BE YOURS!
MERELY MAKE A WISH, AND FOLLOW THE BALLOON TO YOUR HEART'S DESIRE!
OH YEH? I CAN HAVE ANYTHING? HOW ABOUT A CIGAR FOR SOAPY?
WH-WHAT TIME IS IT? OOOH! ME HEAD! KEEP IT DOWN, EH?
THE BALLOON HEARS!
HASTEN! ALREADY YOUR WISH IS ALOFT UPON THE ZEPHYRS!
HONK!
GEE, THANKS!
WHAT THE —? HEY! NEIL! WATCH OUT!
SCREEEECH!
CRASH!
OH, ME CRANIUM!


GEEZ, HE'S EVEN TOO STUPID TA GIT HIT!
WHAT'S HE DOIN'? —IF I WANTS ANY PEACE DIS MORNIN', I BETTER STOP 'IM!
WE HAVE DISCOVERED A SUBJECT OF RARE GULLIBILITY, DIABLO!
OH BOY! MAGIC!
J. CHIMP TOBACCON
SIGN HERE... SO WHERE D'YA WANT 'EM?
AW, RIGHT HERE'S FINE.
WHY DOES HE ALWAYS PICK THE *MORNIN' AFTER* FOR DESE STUNTS? — NOW WHERE'D HE GO?
♪
HEY! MOLESTING PRIVATE PROPERTY! ABRIDGING THE RIGHTS OF THE SMALL BUSINESSMAN!
HO! THE *CRIMINAL ELEMENT!* BE WARNED! THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW IS AFOOT!
THERE'S A CAT UNDER MY CIGARS!
SOAPY! I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN! I WARN YOU, CAT, THE WEED OF CRIME BEARS BITTER FRUIT!
CIGARS DIS CHEAP IS *DEFINITELY* A WEED OF CRIME!
AHA! RESISTING ARREST! INDIFFERENCE AFTER THE FACT! MALICIOUS AFTERTHOUGHT! DECEASE AND DESIST, FELON!
CLANCY, HOW'S ABOUT AT LEAST CUTTIN' THE WHISTLE?
THE TURNOUT EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS, DIABLO!
THE ATMOSPHERE IS INDEED RUMBUSTIOUS, DIEGO!
BOY, SOAPY IS SURE GOING TO BE HAPPY!
TWEET! TWEET!
EAT
FUN


STEP RIGHT UP, LITTLE LADY! HIT THE DUCKS AND WIN A *PRIZE*!
WHAT DO I WIN IF I HIT THE *HORSE*?
A FOOL AND HIS WISHES ARE NOT PARTED, DIABLO!
INDEED, FOOLS RUSH IN, DIEGO!
SHOOT TO KILL!
FUN!
25
HORSE? WHAT HORSE?
HEY, IS THIS GAME CROOKED?
STOP DAT HORSE!
WOW! A *CAT*! WHAT DO I GET IF I HIT THE *CAT*?
POW!
POW!
POW!
TWING! TWANG!
PLANG!
PRING!
YIPE! YA GITS A *DEAD CAT*, LADY!
GIMME MY *PRIZE*, DUDE!
HERE'S A BOX OF *CIGARS*!
RING DEM BELLS!
CIGARS!? THAT'S NO PRIZE FOR A *LADY*! I WANT A *DOLLY*!
ALRIGHT, WHERE DO YOU KEEP YOUR DOLLIES?
OPTIONAL ACCESSORY TO A *CRIME*! BEFUDDLE AN OFFICER, WILL YOU? SURRENDER TO THE HANDS OF JUSTICE! PAY YOUR DEBT TO SOCIETY!
PUT IT ON MY VISA CARD, CLANCY!
IT SURE IS GOING *FAR*! THIS MUST BE A *REAL SPECIAL* CIGAR!
NOW, NOW, RATCLIFFE! PLAY NICE!
?


WHAT THE DEUCE? WHERE ARE MY....? RATCLIFFE! HAVE YOU PURLOINED MY HAVANA PERFECTOS?
WHAT? YOU MEAN MY CLUSTER BOMB? READY— AIM....
FIRE! BOMBS AWAY!
THIS IS IT! IT'S RAINING CIGARS! Y-A-A-A-A-Y!
HA! PERHAPS SOME DEVILISH RUSE!
AND SOAPY! YOU'RE HERE! THAT'S GREAT! THESE CIGARS ARE YOUR BIRTHDAY PRESENT!
CEEGARS-? ME-ME BIRT'DAY-?
OOOH-ME HEAD!
YOU'RE BOTH UNDER AR'REST! TAKING LIBERTIES WITH THE PUBLIC FREEDOM!
JEEZ, CAN YA SPARE US THE AUDIO PORTION, CLANCY?— AND SEE DAT SIGN? YEZ JIST STEPPED OUTSIDE A' YER JURISDICTION! HERE, HAVE A CEEGAR!
WHAT? LOOPHOLES! THE LAW'S HANDS ARE FIT TO BE TIED!
CITY LIMITS
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SOAPY!
NEIL, I DOESN'T KNOW WHAT ME LIFE WOULD BE LIKE WIT'OUT YOU AROUND...
BALLY ODD! THEY SEEM TO HAVE VANISHED!
PERHAPS MAGIC IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER, DIABLO!
INDEED, AND POSSIBLY WISHES ARE HORSES, DIEGO!
MOOMPH!



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BY
DAVE
SIM

Published by
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BASIC DIAMONDBACK

The Order of the Hands:

Magician-Priestess	60 pts.
Priestess-Priestess	60 pts.
Magician-Queen	50 pts.
Magician-King	50 pts.
Priestess-King	45 pts.
Priestess-Queen	45 pts.
Priestess-Priest	40 pts.
Queen-King	40 pts.
Magician-Priest	40 pts.
Queen-Queen	35 pts.
King-King	35 pts.
Queen Priest	30 pts.
King-Priest	30 pts.
Priest-Priest	25 pts.

(Our apologies for leaving these out of the printed rules.)

Match Diamondback

KARET, the variation described in Swords #1 was essentially a lower middle class variation popular in Lower Felda, Iest and other major population centres. The act of **doubling** the initial wager was, in fact, a peculiarity of the emerging urban centres, reflecting the concentration of currency in the densely-populated capitals of the southern city states. The more money available in a city, the more frenzied the betting in its lower and upper-middle class taverns.

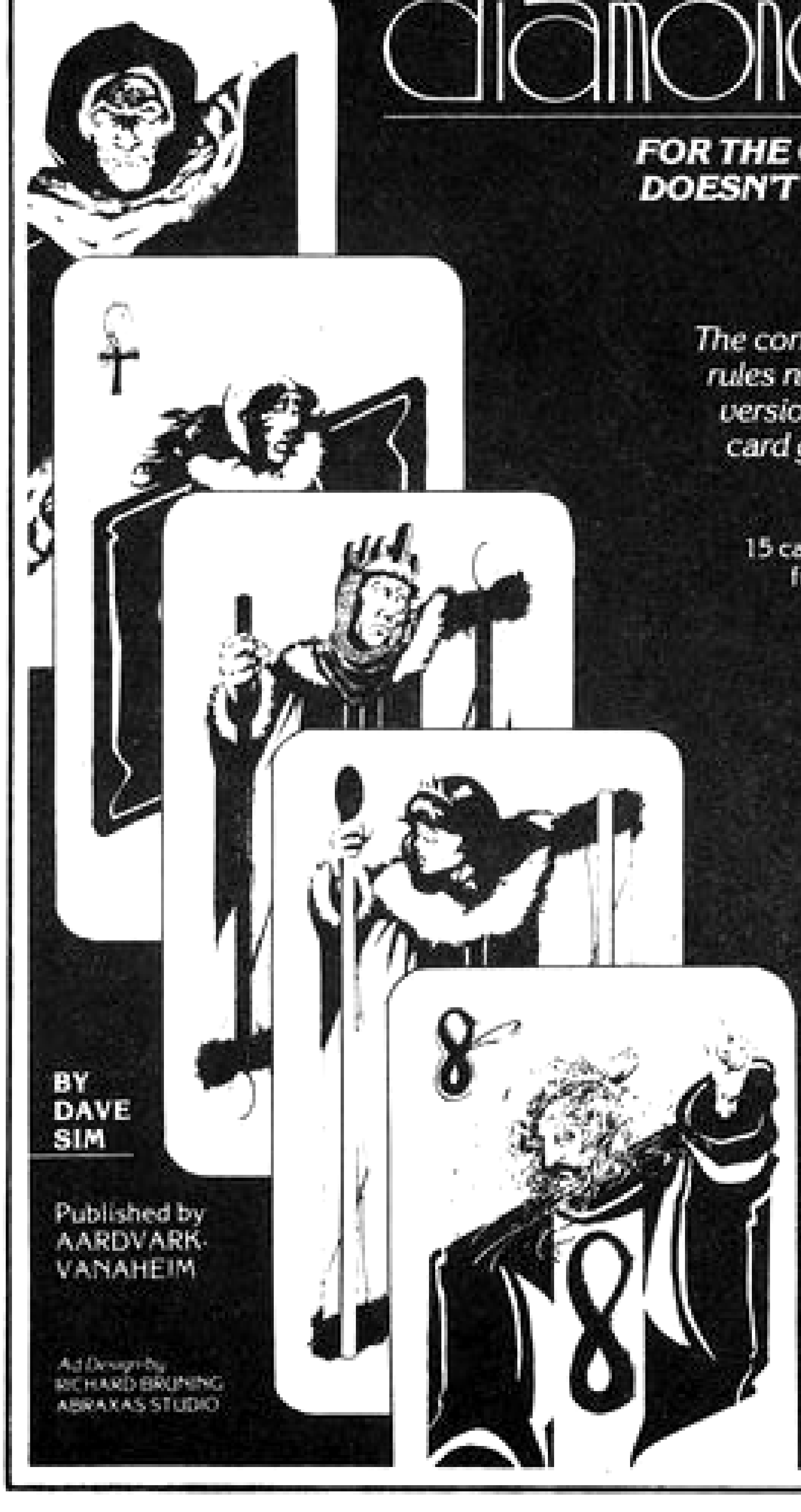
MATCH DIAMONDBACK, on the other hand, was the game of preference among the stingy military personnel of Onliu, and was much tamer when compared with its metropolitan cousin. Onliu soldiers were paid by the government a wage of twenty copper bits a month, out of which they were required to "kick-back" a certain percentage for food, lodgings and other necessities. As a consequence, the Onliu soldier might have only three bits left for betting after his expenses were paid. Match diamondback was usually played with representative chips of varying denominations and it was not unusual for several hundred chips to be bet in a marathon game over several days for the sake of two or three copper bits that they represented.

THE DECK consists of 1 magician, 2 priestesses, 3 queens, 4 kings and 5 priests. For three players, the deck consists of 1 magician, 4 priestesses, 6 queens, 8 kings and 10 priests (two decks minus one magician). For four players, the deck consists of 1 magician, 6 priestesses, 9 queens, 12 kings and 15 priests (three decks minus two magicians).

THE HANDS magician-priestess 70 pts.; priestess-priestess 65 pts.; magician-queen 60 pts.; magician-king 55 pts.; priestess-king 50 pts.; priestess-queen 45 pts.; priestess-priest 40 pts.; queen-king 35 pts.; magician-priest 30 pts.; queen-queen 25 pts.; king-king 20 pts.; queen-priest 15 pts.; king-priest 10 pts.; priest-priest 5 pts.

THE GAME begins with a draw for high card. Winner deals the first hand, two cards face down to each player. Each placer examines his cards and the dealer makes a wager which must be matched by each of the other players (there is traditionally no ante in Match Diamondback. A player who folds on each hand can play all night and not lose a single coin). Each player then exposes one of his cards and the dealer initiates a new round of betting, each player choosing whether to match the dealer's wager or fold. Winning hand takes the pot. In the case of a tie between two players' hands, the pot is continued over into the next hand. If there are three players in the game and two are tied on a hand, the pot is split between the two players. If all three are tied, the pot is carried over into the next hand. If there are four players in a game and two players' hands are tied in points, the pot is split between the two tied players. If three or four players are tied in points, the pot is carried over into the next hand.

THE MOST UNIQUE FEATURE of Match Diamondback is the rule that the game must continue until a majority of the players involved agree to end it. (In a two-man game, both would have to agree, in a three-man game two would have to agree and in a four-man game, three would have to agree.) Very often another soldier would be asked to hold the contested coins in trust until a game was decided. "Coin-men" were responsible for organizing the closest approximation of a banking system ever to evolve in Onliu's loosely-knit military society, lending coins held in trust, fencing loot from military raids into neighboring countries, etc. It was not unusual for a game to drag on over several months, since a player leaving the game before a consensus was reached forfeited his winnings.



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Published by AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

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THE HANDS magician-priestess 70 pts.; priestess-priestess 65 pts.; magician-queen 60 pts.; magician-king 55 pts.; priestess-king 50 pts.; priestess-queen 45 pts.; priestess-priest 40 pts.; queen-king 35 pts.; magician-priest 30 pts.; queen-queen 25 pts.; king-king 20 pts.; queen-priest 15 pts.; king-priest 10 pts.; priest-priest 5 pts.

THE GAME begins with a draw for high card. Winner deals the first hand, two cards face down to each player. Each placer examines his cards and the dealer makes a wager which must be matched by each of the other players (there is traditionally no ante in Match Diamondback. A player who folds on each hand can play all night and not lose a single coin). Each player then exposes one of his cards and the dealer initiates a new round of betting, each player choosing whether to match the dealer's wager or fold. Winning hand takes the pot. In the case of a tie between two players' hands, the pot is continued over into the next hand. If there are three players in the game and two are tied on a hand, the pot is split between the two players. If all three are tied, the pot is carried over into the next hand. If there are four players in a game and two players' hands are tied in points, the pot is split between the two tied players. If three or four players are tied in points, the pot is carried over into the next hand.

THE MOST UNIQUE FEATURE of Match Diamondback is the rule that the game must continue until a majority of the players involved agree to end it. (In a two-man game, both would have to agree, in a three-man game two would have to agree and in a four-man game, three would have to agree.) Very often another soldier would be asked to hold the contested coins in trust until a game was decided. "Coin-men" were responsible for organizing the closest approximation of a banking system ever to evolve in Onliu's loosely-knit military society, lending coins held in trust, fencing loot from military raids into neighboring countries, etc. It was not unusual for a game to drag on over several months, since a player leaving the game before a consensus was reached forfeited his winnings.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Deni and Dave

It has been my observation that hanging around in comic shops can get you ahead in this world. Case in point: I recently met a very good local artist while searching for my new titles. Whenever my friends and I meet new people who are also fans, we get into extensive discussions on the merits (or lack of merits) in mainstream comics. This day was no exception. It came up that I am putting together an alternative comic showcasing the work of writers and artists in the Atlanta area. He showed up at my house a few days later with examples of his work, and among them were sketches of Cerebus. When questioned about what "it" was, he urged me to buy one and find out for myself.

Later, at the good ol' comic shop, I picked up a copy of 36 and read it in the store. I quickly picked up two more copies (back issues) and cursed myself for having only $5.00. Never, ever, . . . ever before have I received such feeling of power and perfection from a story, and my awe is even more increased in light of the fact that I really felt for these characters who are totally unfamiliar to me. Wow. Amazingly enough, I am now at a total loss for words. Thanks for Cerebus, it is much needed in the rather barren world of comics today.

Rob Blackburn
c/o Lawnchair Comics, Ltd.
4601 Buford Way
Chanblee, Ga

This is for the benefit of those people who maintain that you cannot enjoy Cerebus without knowing everything that is going on. Try being a little more patient. I think you'll find Cerebus worth the trouble some day.

Dear Dave

"Merely Magnificent!" cries the larynx of the appreciative fan. I was dilatory in hieing me hence to the comic book store and thus was able to make off with issues 38 and 39 of the earthpig born in one swell foop . . . As foops go, it was indeed pretty swell. The excruciatingly frustrating scene in 38 where Astoria dissuaded the aardvark from dicing and slicing Elrod was yet another vindication of your eschewal of the his-sword-wove-a-glittering-web-of-steel-as-he-reaped-a-bloody-harvest stories. The embourgoisement of Cerebus was necessary for this and the whole issue of 36, but anyone who still repairs to the Ram's Lord's with a sack of flour and studded chain is not yet down for the count. To paraphrase Dirty Fleagle, stand whar yer at, fancy boy, if the result is stories as hilarious and deftly convincing as these.

Which brings me to #39. If Jim Bertrand was the catalyst for all this, he should get to lick apricot brandy out of Jaka's naval. It reminded me of those self-indulgent super-star jam sessions that you sometimes get at rock benefits. Lord Julius, Elrod, the Regency Elf, and those two crowdpleasers in the Tompkins household, Dirty Fleagle and his baby brother Dirty Drew. We all collapsed laughing and hăd to cover our valuables. Plus the self-defenestration of Cootie. Between that and his use of the albino as a featherduster, I'd say Cerebus had managed to avenge some of the indignities he's suffered of late. I don't suppose there's any chance of stuffing the McGrew brothers and perhaps Astoria into the closet with Lord Julius, Elrod and Cerebus, to the point of making it a *Night at the Opera* stateroom scene. Astoria finds Cerebus maddening enough; I'm amazed she ever could have tolerated Julius' verbal filigrees to get married in the first place. She is better looking than Margaret Dumont, though. As for the appearance by Julius' brother Leonard, as a consolation until the blessed event we have the Sepran soldiers in *The Beguiling*; "I'ma show you da ugliest lil' gorl inna whorl' ", "Shoo, shoo."

A word of explanation; it was my younger brother who wrote in with the paranoid fantasy about Bill Mantlo taking over. He has never been the same since Godcorp did what they did to the Little Guy. Of late, he has started raving about a special Aardvarkworld issue, featuring interviews with Aardvark Schwarzenegger, Aardvark longa, vita brevis. And there could be a tastefully rendered scene of Cerebus in bed with Jaka. Consider it assuming the Mantlo of greatness.

I was sure ("shoo") that the run of white covers would continue till *High Society* was finito.

Steven Tompkins
938 Johnson Hall
Columbia University
New York, N.Y. 10027

For performance of Aarvarkian loyalty above and beyond the call of duty, Jim Bertrand is belatedly granted a ceremonial lick. Step forward and present tongue, you lucky dog.

Dear Dave and Deni

It was only the beginning of this year that I discovered your wonderful aardvark. I bought the three Swords Volumes because of all those rave reviews I kept coming across in various

Photo by Terry O'Brien

A TALE OF TWO AARDVARKS

The July 1982 Chicago Comicon featured not one but two aardvark costumes in its costume parade. Pictured at left is Rose Hille resplendant in High Society bathrobe and brandishing the world's smallest sword. At right is young Patrick Lackey who reportedly almost suffered EPMD (Earth-pig Melt-down) in the 37° + heat at Chicago's American - Congress Hotel.

Photo by Harry Boll

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

fanzines - especillay BEM, a british zine you may have heard of. I found everything I heard to be justified. I was, as so many before me, instantly hooked on this brill non-burrowing burrowing animal. Grey is the colour to be, it would seem, and three feet high -- so I am dyeing myself accordingly and undergoing major surgery. Fortunately my toes were modified for digging some time ago when I first became a member of the Unholy Legion of the Unemployed. Listen, mates, you have started an earth pig fandom in a tiny east coast town on the other side of the Atlantic from you. Your influence is far-reaching. Well, does power tend to corrupt? If it does it's not showing in your creation yet -- which remains painstaking, detailed, deep and innovative, i.e. totally unlike the smug product of certain large and complacent comic companies who seem to only turn out 10% good stuff eg. DAREDEVIL, whereas independents such as A.V. and WARP turn out 100% good stuff. You have one title to concentrate on - and the love and care goes in like a long snout into an anthill and sux out the ants of artistry and magic and places them in the aardvarkian oral orifice of your great, great comic. The caring shows, folks, and the lucky readers get readable creativity, not PRODUCT.

You'll be pleased to hear that the-creature-with-the-Dutch-name-and-large-pointed-ears- and -who- now- looks-less-like-a-bunny's comic is receiving better distribution over here now. I have no trouble picking up consecutive issues, (even back issues), every month -- a little late but better by far than never.

As for your new back-ups -- a spiffy idea -- a great showcase. It's heartwarming to see that now you're making it big you are giving a helping hand to other upcoming artists. That says a lot of good things about you both. I especially enjoyed the Dr. Franklin strip -- very offbeat, very funny, very chilling, and damn good story, too! Could we please see more work by the talented Mr. Loebs?

Great Lettercol, nice photos, I'm looking forward to Swords#4 (Barry Smith, really? Kind of full circle, yes?)

All the very best of luck.

Chris Green
24 Brookland Ave.
Cleethorpes, South Humberside
England

Bill Loebs is presently developing an idea for a possible five or six issue mini-series for Aardvark-Vanaheim. (Note - see note from the publisher for more info. Deni). Reaction to Dr. Franklin has been overwhelmingly positive, by the way.

Dear Dave and Deni

If Cerebus is not going to ask Astoria his fourth and fifth questions, can I?

Daniel Pei
7002 Boulevard East, Apt. 231G
Guttenburg, N.J.

No.

Dear Dave

Now you've done it. I'm going to have to make a fool out of myself (a task no one needs to help me with).

The last three issues of Cerebus were brilliant. "The Night Before" (#36) left me both stunned and a bit misty eyed at the ending. "It's Showtime" (#37) was biting and witty. "Petuniacon . . . Day Two" showed the usual high quality character development along with a fantastic layout.

See . . . I told you. Nothing is more boring or repetitious than a letter stating how "wonderful" the last issue(s) are/were. I had always hoped that when I first wrote to you I could be clever, insightful, witty, etc. But the last three issues made such a giant impression that I could not sit and wait for the right moment. I've read all your issues (probably the "first" time you've heard that) and find that you possess an extremely rare talent. That talent is multiple level writing (for lack of a better term). Lots of current artists (in the "underground" and "overground") are writing exciting stories, doing smart layouts, and attracting attention and followers. However, for the most part they are one level writers. The stories may be exciting, funny, satirical, or whatever they choose; the characters well defined and either original or parodies; and they may be single issues or "sagas".

However . . . you combine all of the above mentioned elements. Like those rare "wits" (as they were known in earlier times) Robert Benchley, James Thurber, Will Rogers, Segar, Walt Kelly, and Gerry Trudeau, your stories and actions can be read on many levels. Yes, I can read Cerebus for the fun or the adventures . . . or I can look at the comments (many times subtle . . . occasionally blatantly obvious) on society, traditions or politics. They can be re-read over and over with equal enjoyment for I always see something new.

With all the renewed interest in science fiction and fantasy (including many college courses and critical essays/books) and the increase of folks analysing everything, I am sure the day will come when Cerebus is included in required reading along with *Alice in Wonderland, Gulliver's Travels, 1984, Brave New World* and *Animal Farm.* Enough of this foolish prattle (before I start lecturing on the necessity for such quality writing). Let me just re-state that the last three issues are without a doubt among my favorite comics . . . with #36 ranking especially high. It' emotional content and wit rivaled almost anything I've seen in recent years . . . and that includes the much lauded E.T. (The Extra Terrestrial). Thanks for the experience.

P.S. Is Cerebus selling his tree drawings?

John Cawley, Jr.
1509 Avenida
Fulleron, CA

Yes, owing to the enormous expenses incurred on next issue's campaign swing though the Northern provinces, Cerebus is liquidating his entire collection. Send $5.00 to Aardvark-Vanaheim, Inc. and we'll see that he gets it. Be sure to specify if you want leaves on it (for an additional charge of $3.00 per leaf). Each sketch is autographed by Cerebus himself. Trust me.

Dave and Deni

What could I say about Cerebus #39 that hasn't been said about Shakespeare, Moliere, or Moe, Larry and Curly? 'Twas a surprising issue!

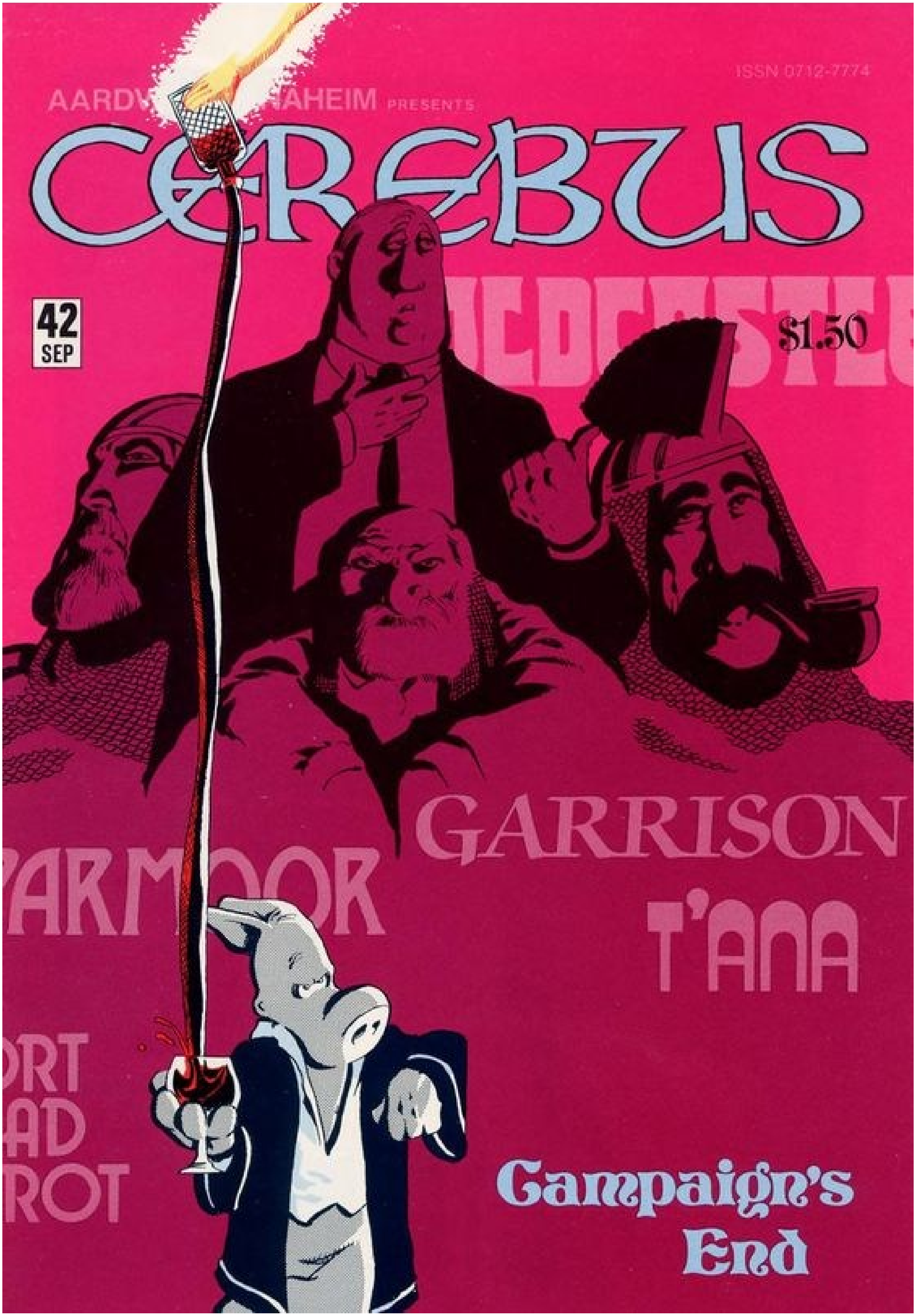
Cerebus was in top form, and it's no wonder that he blew his top with Elrod.

Oh, by the way, in regards to your "notes" section, since Cerebus isn't a "thinly veiled autobiographical manifestation" or what have you, I do believe that I spotted you in this issue. You're Lord Julius' shower cap, right Dave? A shabbily disguised autobiographical manifestation of your true feelings!

Now, don't repress it. You feel that you're riding on Julius to the road to success (hence the showercap). Now, don't you feel better now that you've let it out? Hmmm?

John A. Wilcox
40 Hales Court
Westport, CT.

You know the worst thing about it is -- I pay this guy fifty bucks an hour to tell me this stuff.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AARDV NAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
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GARRISON
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Campaign's End

A Note from the Publisher

With this issue, it's time to stop worrying about the tour. By the time # 42 is shipped, problems such as trying to get discounts on hotel chains, or keeping transportation costs down on one-way flights will be solved.

Meanwhile, Dave and I have been corresponding with Fred Patten lately (the head of the Friends of Cerebus Club). The fan club is on the verge of an expansion and Dave and I are trying to keep in touch a little better than before. I'm hoping we'll see some of the members of the Fan Club in Los Angeles while we are there on the tour. If you are a member, get in touch with Fred so we can make some arrangement to meet as many of you as we can while we are in L.A. I hope that those members that live in various cities around the US will be dropping by to say hello when we are in their area.

On the letters page this issue, Scott Campbell suggests that I look into the possibility of getting Michael T. Gilbert to do a Wraith story for Unique Stories. Well, in this issue we do indeed have a Michael T. Gilbert story, although it is not a Wraith story. (We will be having a Wraith story in Michael's upcoming book, "Strange Brew". It will be out by the end of this year.) The story in this issue is one of his Tiny Terror Tales, a series that Michael conceived especially for Unique Stories. The story is done with "Smilin' Ed" artist Raoul Vezina. Raoul and Michael go back a long way. In fact, the two attended the same college and got together when Michael wanted to publish his own comic book, "New Paltz Comics", in 1972. Michael and Raoul haven't worked together on a story in the ten years that have passed since then. I'm quite pleased that two artists that we enjoy so much have been given the opportunity to work together again. Michael took a trip to New York to work on the stories with Raoul, and while he was there he finally met Will Eisner. He described it to me as one of the biggest thrills of his life. With "Flush", Michael is making his first attempt at what he refers to as "a silent story". Please let us know if you'd like to see more stories by Michael T. Gilbert in Unique Stories and if you'd like to see more projects with him.

Last year, Dave was nominated for two awards from the Small Press Writers and Artists Association. This year, he received in the mail two awards from them. The first was awarded to Dave for best writer in the field of comics. The second was awarded to Cerebus the Aardvark for best magazine in the field of comics. Dave has just now gone down to the studio to put them up on what we like to call "the award wall" at the studio. It's kinda nice to see this stuff where he works every day.

One of the real pleasures for Dave and I this month, was that the play "Annie" finally came to Kitchener. We had discussed the possibility of seeing it when we first heard that the play would be coming here (a minor miracle for a place the size of Kitchener), but we hadn't expected that we would enjoy it half as much as we did. There is something totally refreshing about a story that is as optimistic as Annie. I have also never seen an "art form" that has so totally captivated Dave's imagination.

One other project that Dave and I are working on is The Cerebus Collector. This will be a companion book to the regular monthly comic for our readers, with unpublished sketches and interviews and a bit of a peek at how Dave actually evolves the story. We haven't finished compiling it yet, but you should be able to get it from your local distributor sometime in 1983. Keep in touch with this page as more details about this and other projects come to light.

Also, Dave has done a strip for EPIC entitled "Arnold the Isshurian". I can't really tell you too much about it, except that it will, of course, be funny. The release date for the issue of EPIC that it will be in, (EPIC #16) should be around the end of November or the beginning of December, according to Mary Jo Duffy. So you folks can just go out there and show Marvel how wonderful an idea it is to have Dave doing a story for them. Although, truth be told, Mary Jo told me that they were *really* pleased to be putting the story in, so maybe it's now just a matter of fulfilling their expectations.

That's it for this issue! I'll see you next time around!!

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 42 SEPTEMBER 1982

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Deni Sim

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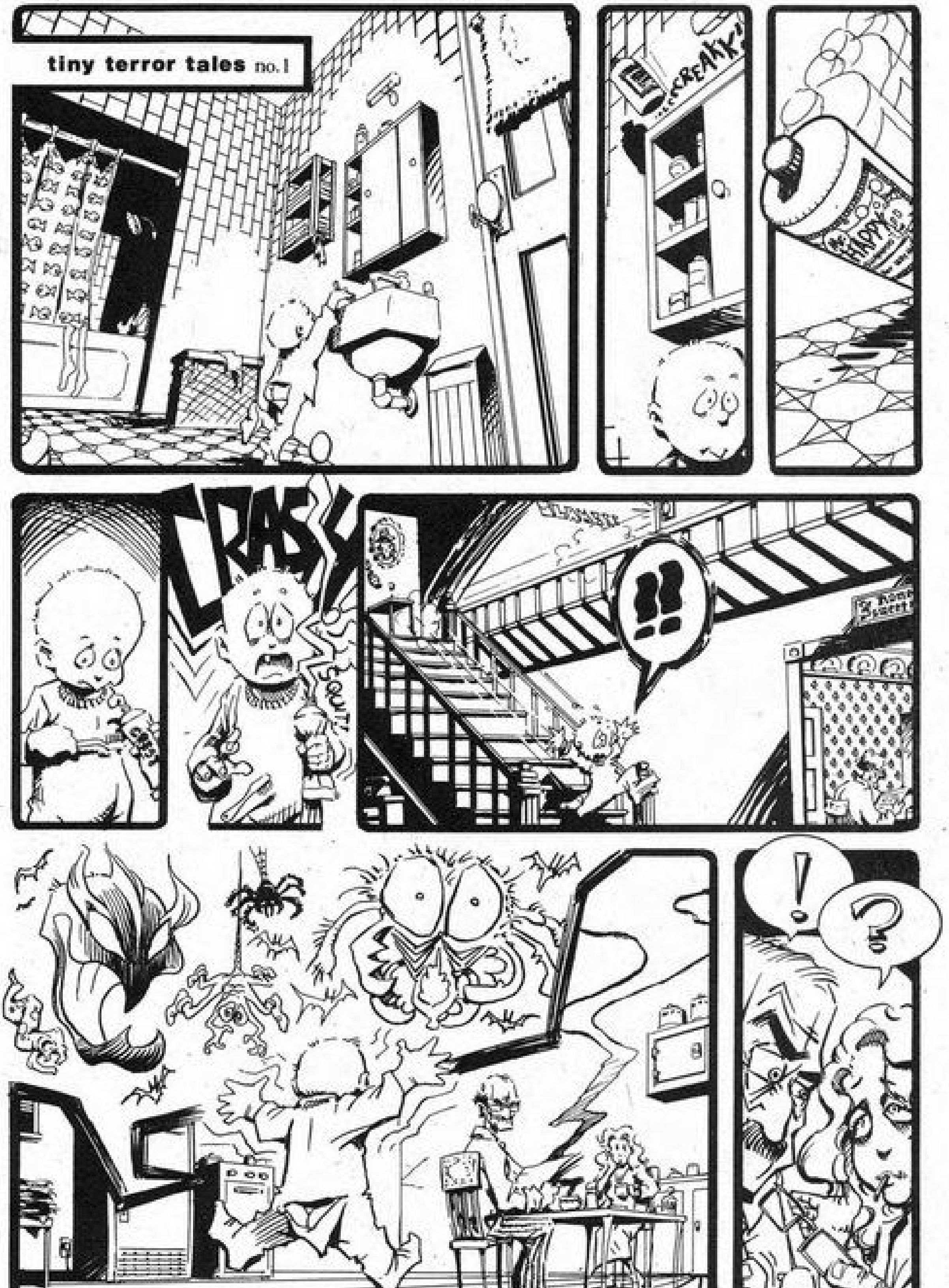
A UNIQUE STORY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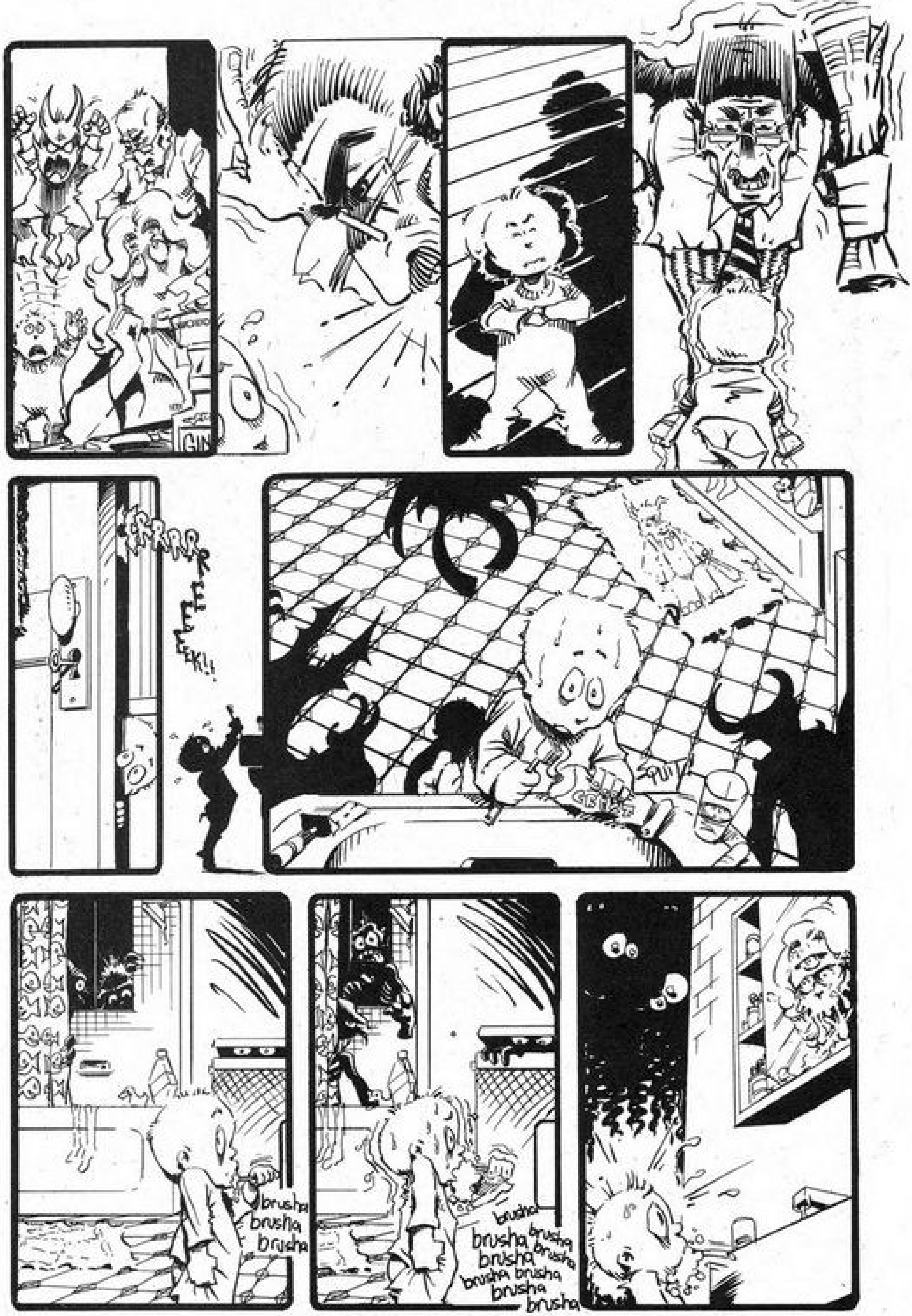
'FLUSH!'™ © 1982 Michael T. Gilbert (script/layout/inks) & Raoul Vezina (finished pencils)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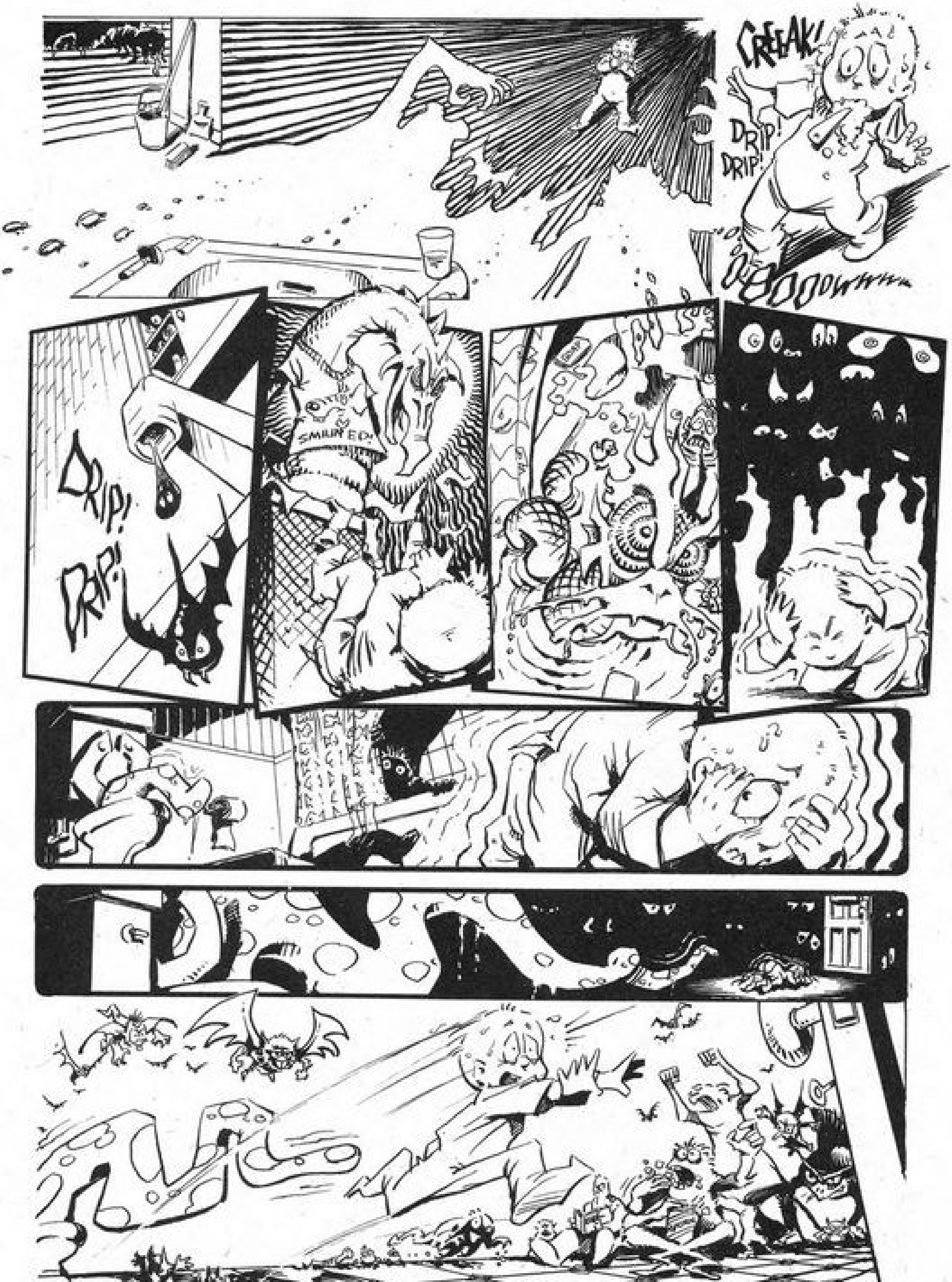
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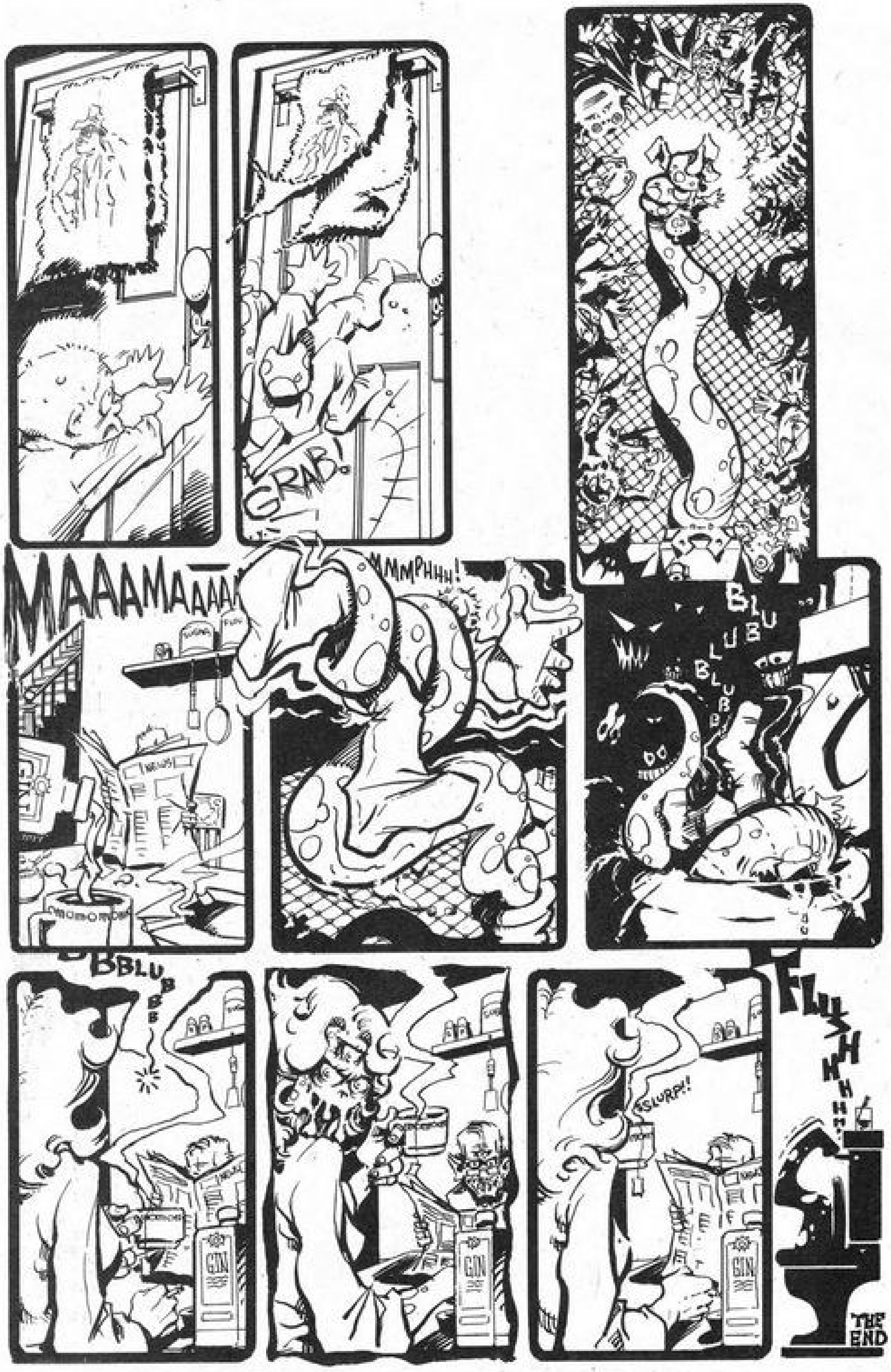
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THE END

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni

I told myself that I wouldn't write until I had some decent criticism. I gave in and decided to write anyway.

This issue (#39) lacks the intensity of the other recent issues. It was a loose issue that went through a variety of people that Cerebus knows. So Cerebus is running for Prime Minister of Iest, is he? What does Lord Julius have up his sleeve? Maybe Astoria is secretly against Lord Julius and plans to overthrow him using the bug, Moon Roach. Getting Cerebus and Elrod into high-ranking political positions is part of his plan to stop Astoria. This leads to Lord Julius' closet discussion with Cerebus and Elrod (hint).

Of course, Cerebus is the downfall of Julius' plans. It seems to me that Cerebus is fed up with politics, or at least, with losing at politics. He won't be happy until he is in control of his own life. If my ideas are right, he might even create some sort of dictatorship.

We are seeing the fall of an empire, aren't we? (Long live the new empire) I've got a zillion questions that I would like to see answered before this 300-issue "novel" is finished. I hope that Cerebus' ultimate destiny is earth-shaking, gigantic, that is. There is evidence that Fate has something big in store for the earth-pig. After all, he's run into a statue of a deity that looks familiar (#5). The "Tomes of the Black Sun" mention a similar nameless god. More recently, the Regency Elf seems to know more than she's telling about early history (#39), all of which indicates that aardvarks were once an important race of "people" in the world. Cerebus is an indication that they will be again. There's also the matter of those prophecies given by the stranger in #35 (who is he?).

Of course I want to eventually find out about Cerebus' past, from baby aardvark to sorcerer's apprentice to the events that took place in #1. In other words, his first twenty-six years of life.

I would like to see Cerebus make better use of his knowledge. I mean, he studied sorcery for three years when he was a teenager. Surely that was good for something.

I can't wait for Mind Game III. Does Cerebus reach the Ninth Sphere? How does he reach these spheres of meditation that take so much meditating by Suentues Po?

Could you keep making "Aardvark Comment" three pages long? I like your long answers. An informative letters page is more fun than one filled with praise.

Speaking of praise you deserve some for breathing life into an alternate world (universe, actually, but I doubt that we'll be seeing offworlders). I hope this world and it's history are explored thoroughly before the "novel" is finished.

Before closing, I'd like to ask a few stray questions:

Are there any more "super-heroic bugs" in this world?

Will we ever see Melvinbone, or any more of Elrod's dying race?

What was the Regency Elf before the Regency Hotel came along? She has been here before there were Prime Ministers, after all.

Does the scene on pages twelve and thirteen of #32 indicate that Cerebus has mental powers, weak sorcerous powers, or was it the Elf's own powers that caused it?

Will the character Death from #4 ever have another part to play in Cerebus' life?

I don't expect answers to these last few questions. Just keep them in mind as you plot page after page of Cerebus.

The best of luck on Cerebus until #300!

Michael Clem
308 South 200 E Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74108

I'm going to number your questions, since you forgot to.

1) Yes.
2) his arm.
3) No you're seeing the metamorphosis of a city-state. The fall of an empire is happening a few hundred miles to the west.
4) Bran Mak Mufin, from issue 5, just better-dressed.
5) Possibly.
6) All is not what it seems (sahib).
7) Deni cut me back to two, but she let me use pictures to make up for it (Deni just decided to apologize, it was just a temporary problem!)
8) Nope.
9) Not in Estarcion.
10) She was one of the Wood Elves in Iest.
11) No, no and partly.
12) He plays a major role in issue #300 (obviously).

Dear Dave and Deni

I'm just writing to commend you on your last two issues (#'s 39 & 40). I was a little disappointed in the mid-thirties - not that they weren't funny, it just took me about three minutes to read one of them. While I can appreciate the mood set up by all that black, and you were a little behind schedule, the lack of interesting backgrounds did little to slow the pace of the story. On the other hand, the Unique stories helped to balance out the issues, and I, for one, would like to see them continued. (A suggestion - if you're looking for material there - why not talk Michael T. Gilbert into doing a couple more Wraith stories?) Issues #39 and 40 did a lot to bolster my confidence. "P-Con Day Three" was a slapstick masterpiece. The pace reached such a frantic level, that each panel was good for at least one laugh if not more. "Campaign" was the type of issue I like to see best. It was intricately plotted and had lots of laughs, action and characters. It's really amazing how well you can delineate a character in such brief appearances and how *funny* they can be. Also, the artwork was the best in issues. The drawings of the ferryboat in the rain and the carriage going through Lower Iest particularly stood out.

Your comments on continuity have brought back to mind a couple of questions that have been bugging me for a while:

1) Whatever happened to the eight bags of gold Lord Julius gave to Cerebus? This was an awful lot of money, and it would take even Cerebus a long time to squander it.
2) Whatever happened to Jaka's sister (?) Katrina and the other two school girls?
3) If Cerebus is now twenty-nine, does that mean that he's been living at the Regency for a year now?

On a parting note, I'd like to say that I'm very disappointed by all the bad mail Astoria is getting. Even though I know she's going to screw over Cerebus sooner or later, I still think that she's a lot more interesting than that wimp Jaka.

Scott Campbell
Wright Quad 5-309
Bloomington, In. 47406

P.S. I've also enjoyed your Lord Julius transcripts. If you compiled a bunch of these into a separate monthly mag, it'd probably outsell Cerebus.

1) It's still buried under the floorboards of the farmhouse Cerebus bought.
2) Theresa is Astoria's new assistant; Katrina and Janette will be back.
3) He arrived in late summer and it is now early winter of 1413.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni

I am decidedly against Cerebus becoming Prime Minister. He has got to be the most selfish character in comics today. The last three pages were very meaningful to me because they proved to me that if Cerebus was in power he would abuse it at the expense of the people. If he does succeed, here's hoping he is overthrown by a revolution or a coup. But make sure that Cerebus lives. He is simply the best thing to hit comics. Without my weekly fix of truly mature comics coming from these pages, life just wouldn't be worth living.

Thanks for reprinting the early episodes of Cerebus. I have been with you only since issue #23. After a brief stint attempting to collect back issues at a tremendous cost I conceeded defeat. Simply put, without Swords of Cerebus, the early collectors' issues would be out of my reach.

Robert Tilley
137 Craighurst Ave.
Toronto, Ont. M4R 1K1

I hope you still find life to be worth living even though Cerebus is a monthly fix. If you've found some way to get a weekly fix, don't you think you should tell all of the other junkies. Hmmm?

Dave Sim

Some thoughts, questions, and ideas. Numbered, basically for the novelty of numbering them.

1) So howcum alluvasuden you signed the cover, the one without the aardvark on it?
2) I've figured it out. The value of a "crown" is equivalent to the current price of a copy of Cerebus.
3) Is Astoria the first, second, or third wife of Lord Julius?
4) When does the Cerebus movie come out, and when will you be on Late Night with David Letterman?
5) Is Cerebus still available for being a mascot?
6) Who do you have to know to get all the Marvel comics free?
7) Hasn't the Moon Roach gone on long enough? Have the bug psyche into another personality like, maybe the cockroach-man. . . .super-cootie?
9) Send advertising rates.
10) Will a "Richard Simmons" character come into the book?

This is my philosophy. At least it's all I can make up right now. So until you wear big wings on your head and give away a free subscription (maybe even after that). . . .

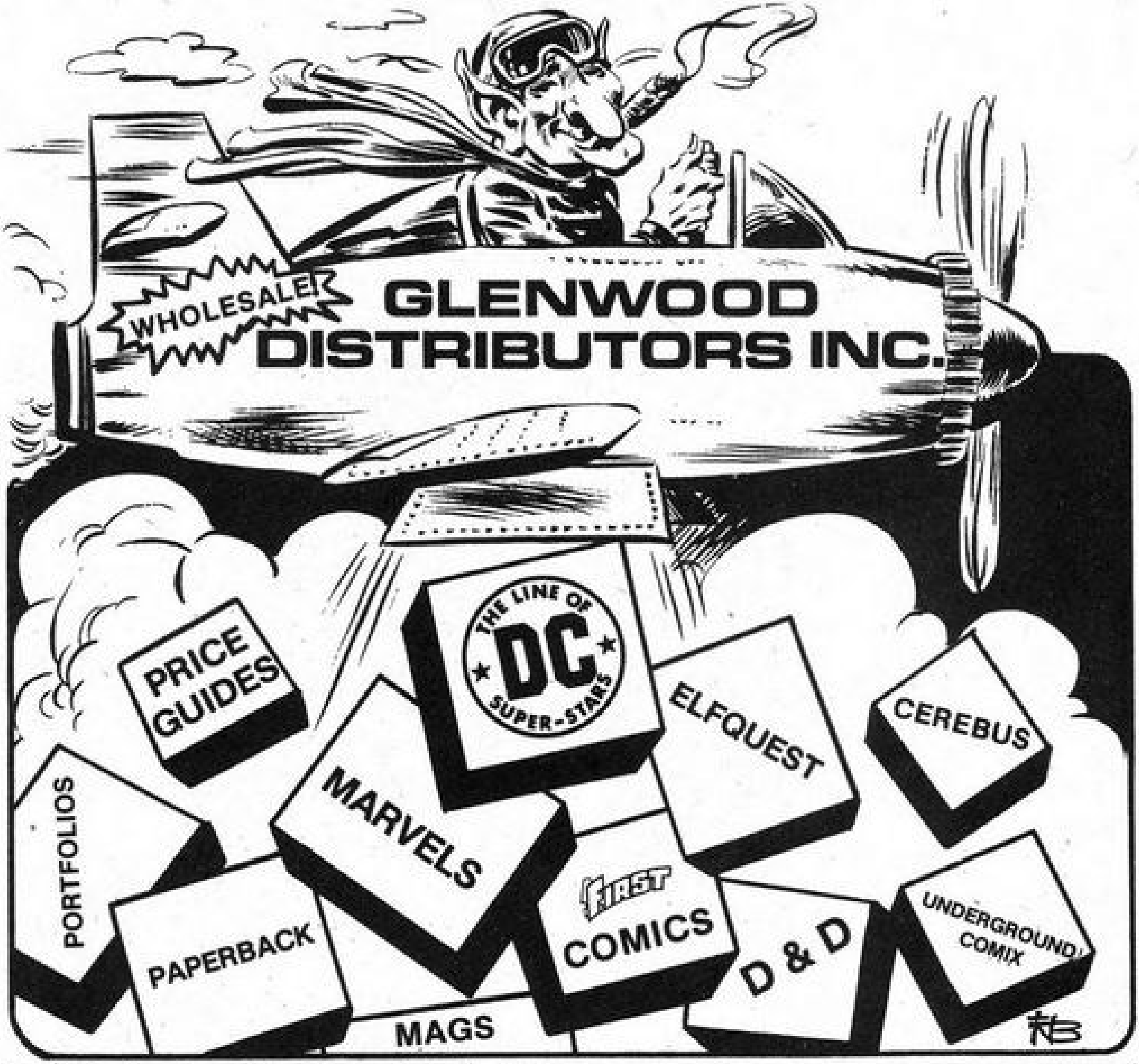
D.B. Eilers
Box 99-C
Monee, Ill. 60449

Post Script: I'm in love with the Regency Elf.

1. *It was a good chance to practice my reverse Neal Adams signature in the hopes that someone would offer me an X-men graphic novel to draw. Alas, Brent Anderson beat me to it.*
2. *Uncanny*
3. *Third*
4. *Next week and the week after that.*
5. *Depends on how many crowns you're offering.*
6. *A guy with dark sunglasses names Shiv who works in the mailroom.*
7. *Funny you should mention Super-cootie. See page 17.*
8. *You missed #8*
9. *No.*
10. *No, you silly bitch.*

Answer to postscript: So am I.

Dave Sim (the famous aardvark artist) describes how you ink comic books in Canada to an amused Klaus Janson (the famous Daredevil artist) at a recent Toronto convention while Roger Stern (the famous Spiderman writer) gives much needed directions to the washroom to one of his many supporters (not shown).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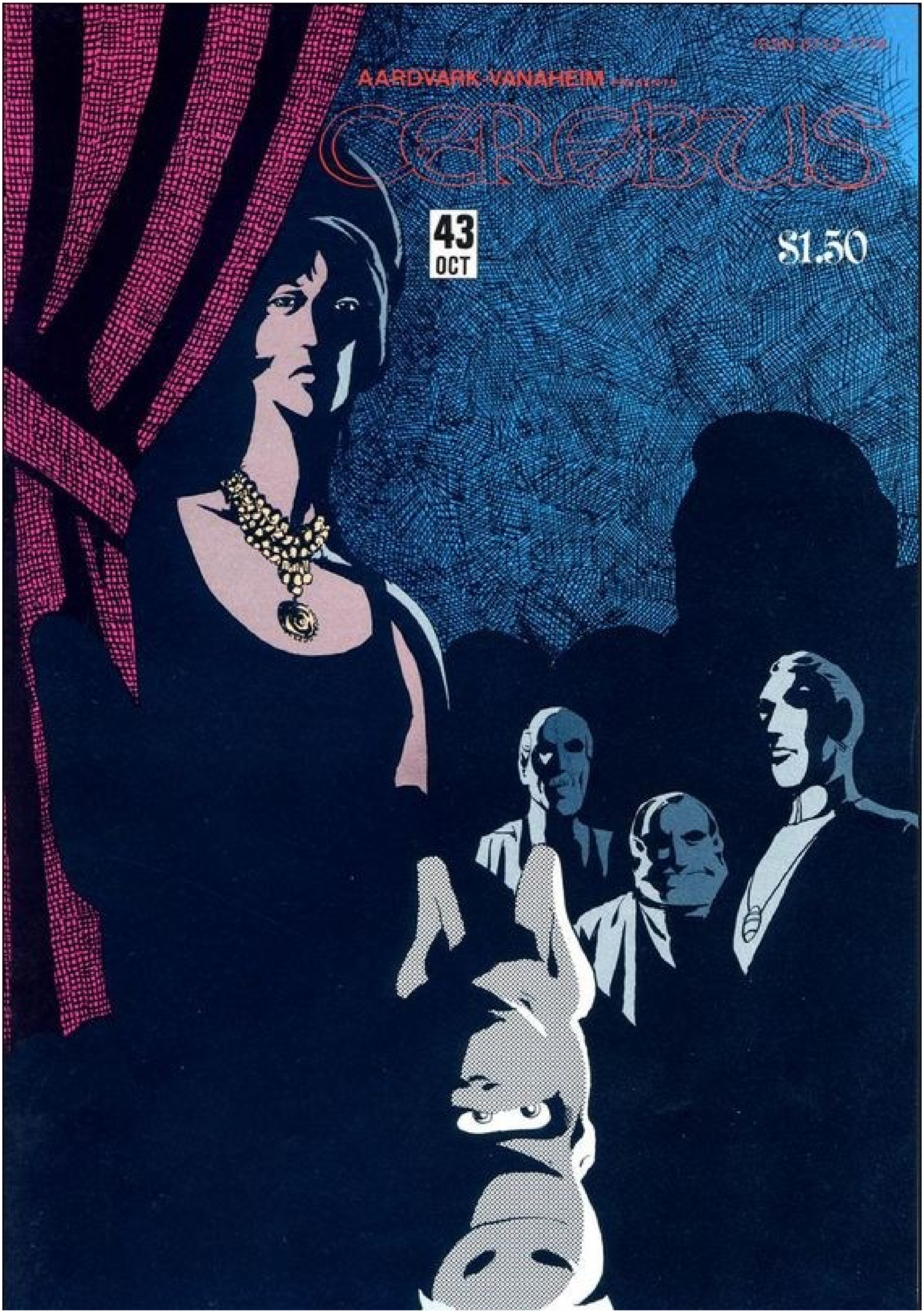
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AARDVARK-VANAHEIM presents
CEREBUS
43
OCT
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A Note from the Publisher

This week, as Dave and I were on our final preparations for the tour, we heard some sad news. Gene Day had died. He died, at age 31, of a heart attack.

The news made us stop and think. How many times had we said, "I've got to slow down my pace of living."?

Gene's death made us sit down and discuss living and dying. One affects the other, and it is pretty easy to just let the whole question of your own death slide past you.

Since that day we have spent quite a few hours talking about it. The realities of what happens if you are the one left behind. It seems ghoulish to talk about funerals and death at our age, but then Gene was the same age as me. The point is, there is no guarantee that all your goals will be met before death comes. Dave and I both agreed that it is unlikely we will ever find a "right" time to die. There is always some project that you wanted to start. Or to finish.

Maybe now is the time to face the realities of death. No one is ever totally prepared for it, but if there is one certainty to life, it is this. Death, when it comes, will catch you unaware.

I didn't know Gene too well. To me he was this big, laughing, hardworking fellow artist friend of Dave's.

When I first met Dave, every other sentence had Gene in it. I wondered, at the time, if Dave should marry me or Gene. All the jealousies fell when I met Gene. I couldn't help but like him.

We had been looking forward to seeing him at a party in Toronto in November, when we got back from the tour. It seems hard to believe he won't be there.

Deni

CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 43 OCTOBER 1982

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Deni Sim

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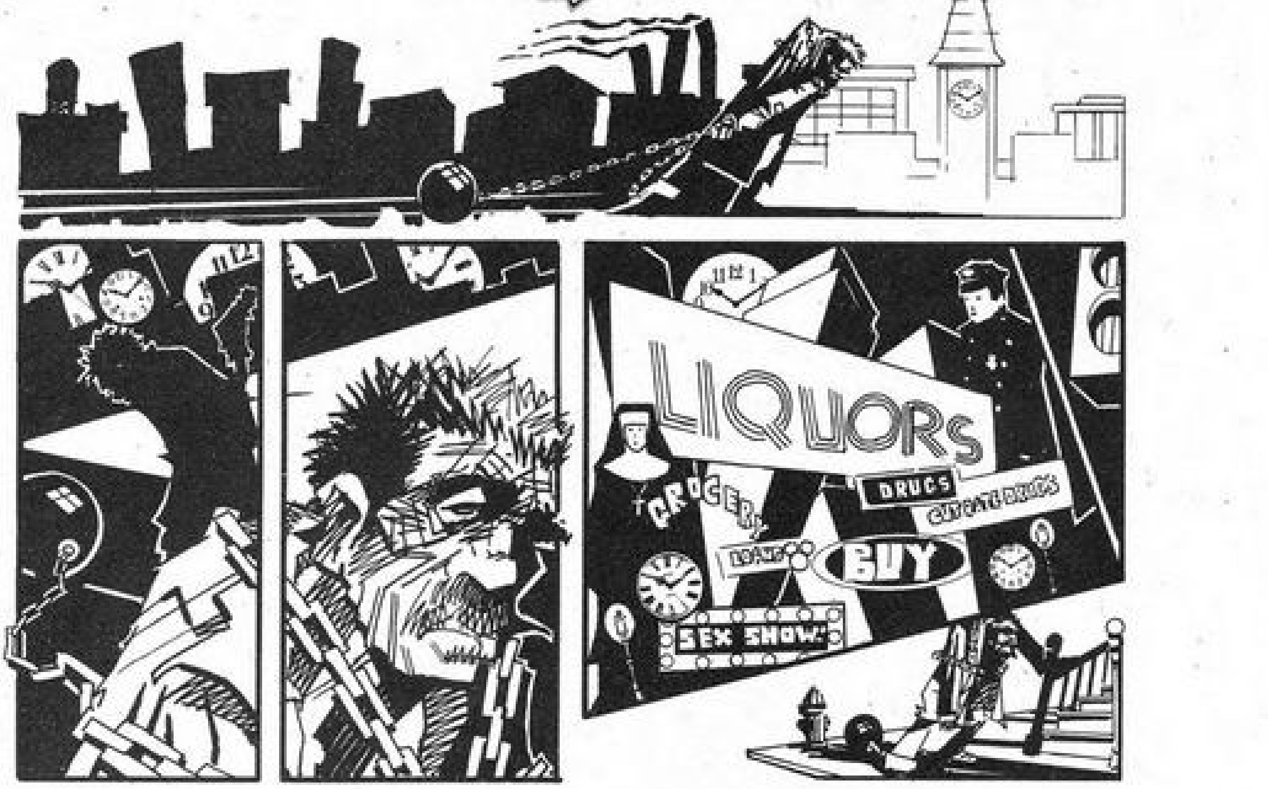
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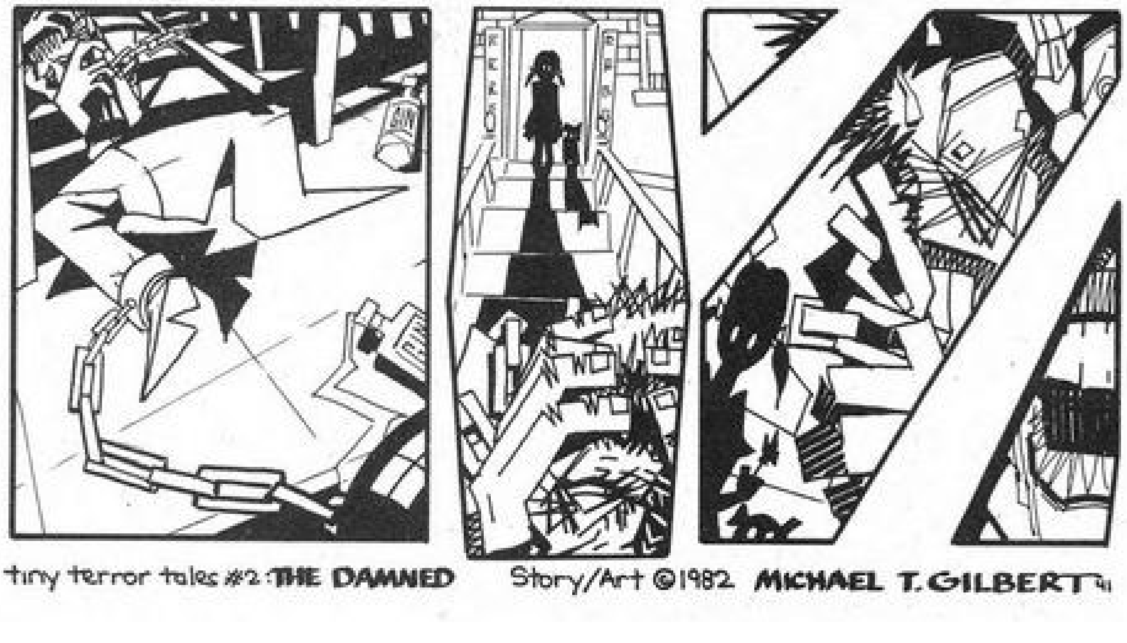
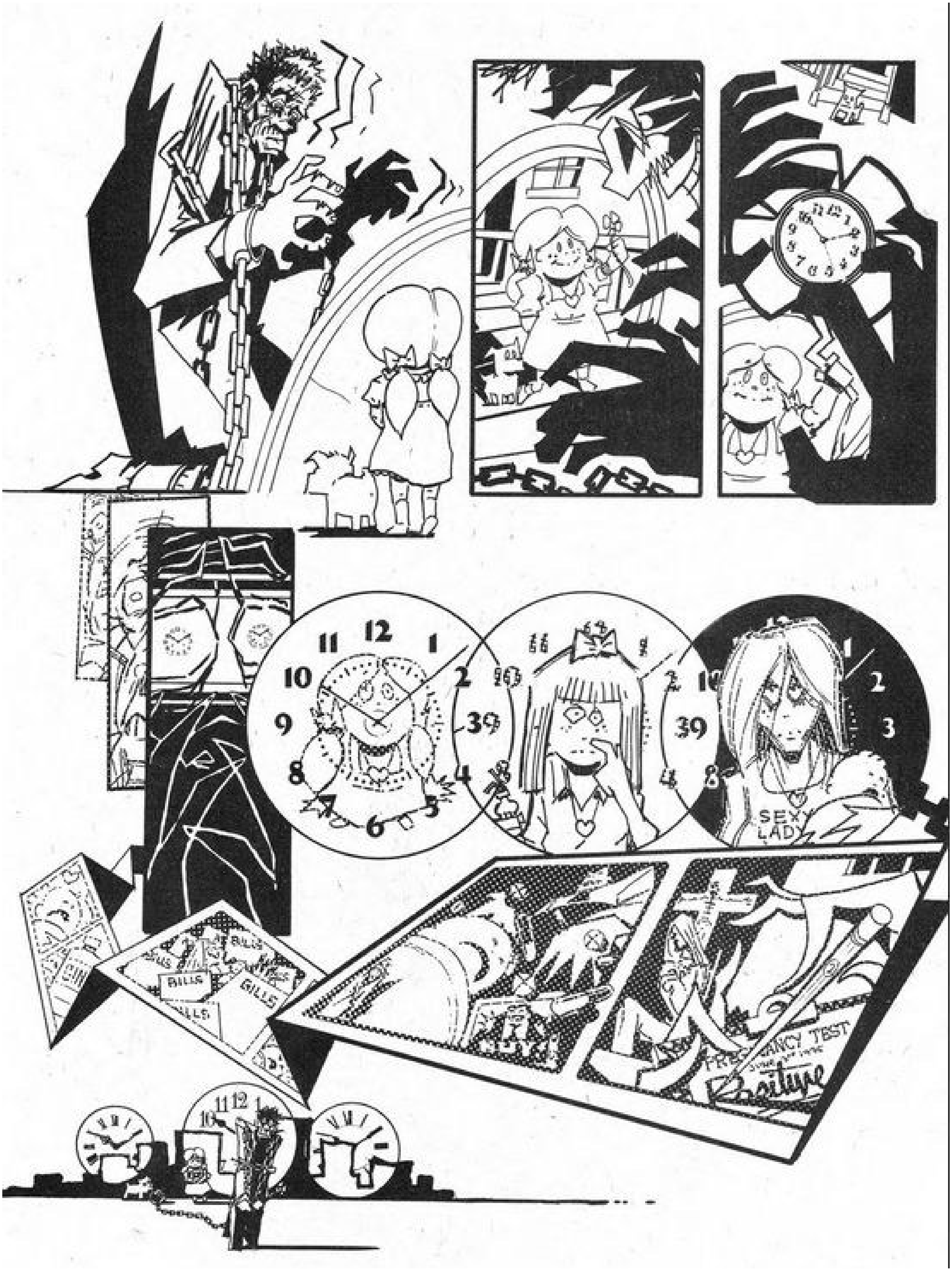


tiny terror tales #2: **THE DAMNED** Story/Art ©1982 **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** 41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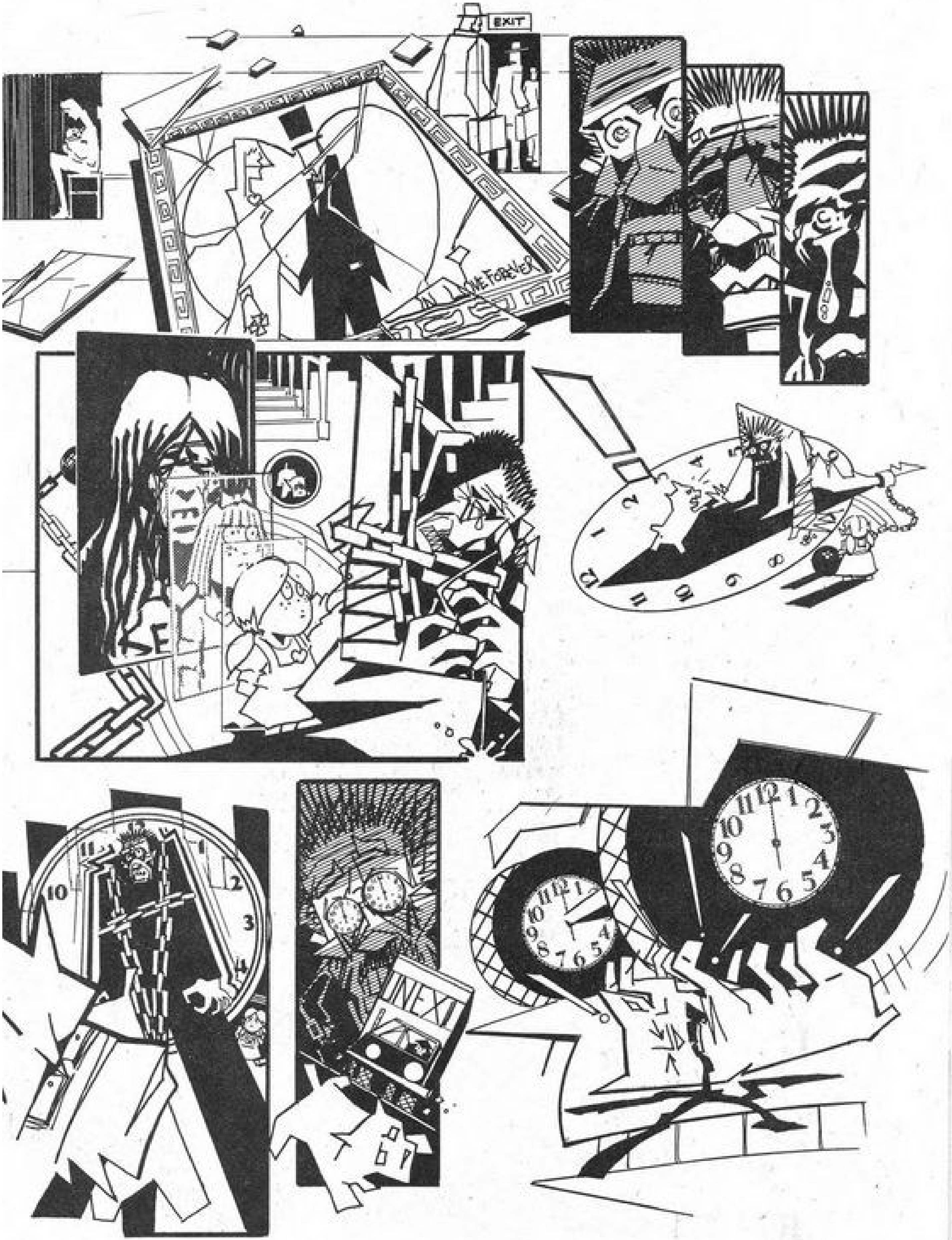
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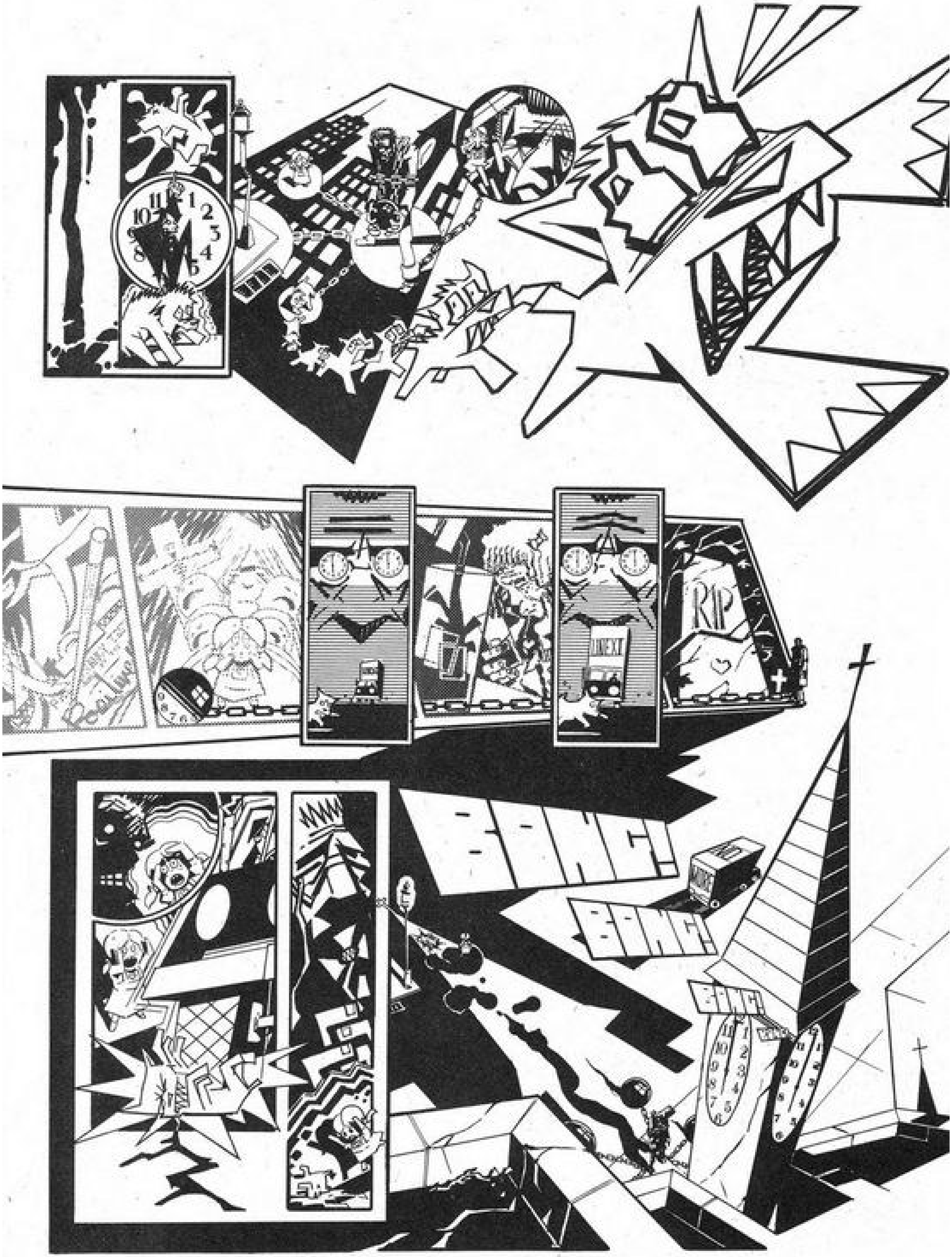
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NEXT
NEXT
BONG!
BONG!
BONG!

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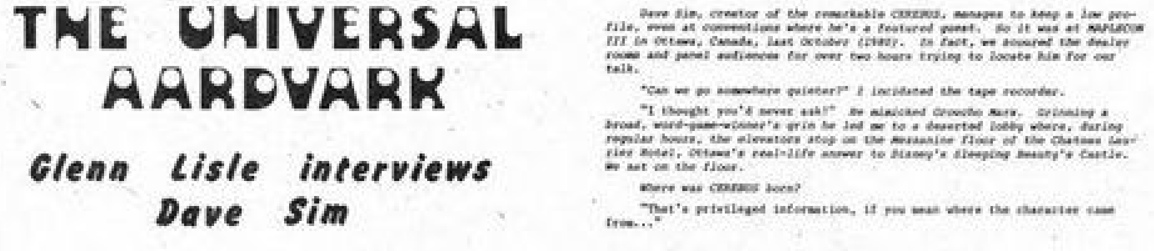
Do you count the days until each issue comes out?
Then why haven't you joined the Friends of Cerebus Club?

This is what you will get:

INTERVIEWS



THE UNIVERSAL AARDVARK

Glenn Lisle interviews Dave Sim

Dave Sim, creator of the remarkable CEREBUS, manages to keep a low profile, even at conventions where he's a featured guest. So it was at MAPLECON III in Ottawa, Canada, last October (1980). In fact, we scoured the dealer rooms and panel audiences for over two hours trying to locate him for our talk.

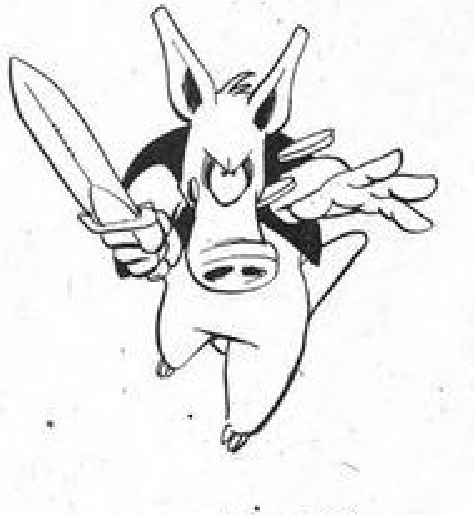
"Can we go somewhere quieter?" I inclined the tape recorder.

"I thought you'd never ask!" He mimicked Groucho Marx. Grinning a broad, word-game-winner's grin he led me to a deserted lobby where, during regular hours, the elevators stop on the Mezzanine floor of the Chateau Laurier Hotel, Ottawa's real-life answer to Disney's Sleeping Beauty's Castle. We sat on the floor.

Where was CEREBUS born?

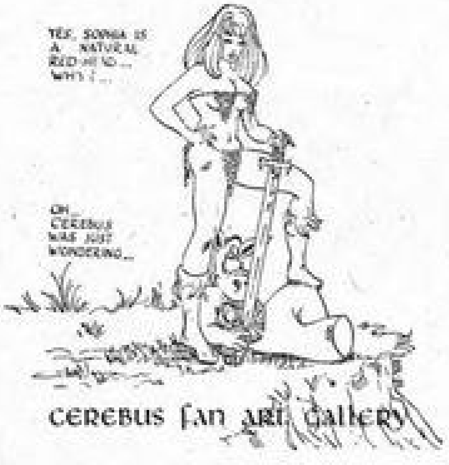
"That's privileged information, if you mean where the character came from..."

UNPUBLISHED DAVE SIM ART



UNUSED SITTON DESIGN · 1979

FAN ART


YES, SONJA IS A NATURAL RED-HEAD... WHY?...
OH... CEREBUS WAS JUST WONDERING...
CEREBUS FAN ART GALLERY

and much more ! ! !

Here's just a sample of last year's "goodies".

- Membership certificate
- "Fight Like an Aardvark" bumper sticker
- "Friends of Cerebus" lapel sticker
- Wallet-sized membership card

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni

Is there any chance of coming to Michigan on your tour?

I live in Lansing, Michigan. Cerebus sells well here. We have two comic shops - the Book Exchange and Curious Books. I would like to meet you, get my #1 validated, and see if Deni looks like the Regency Elf. (Sigh!)

By the way, when I do meet you - Do you get tired of the compliments and praise? Or should I have a smug Cerebus look as if saying: "They're lucky I read the thing"? This is my first letter to you. I'll be writing more. Cerebus brings a lot of joy to me and I feel I should share that with you.

P.S. You are doing a big service with Unique Stories. Neil the Horse is the best yet, please more Neil.

Ron Langs
731 W. Genesee
Lansing, MI., 48915

We will probably be in Michigan on a "Great Lakes" tour at some future date. More Neil is on the way.

Dear Dave,

I don't see where the criticisms of "High Society" are at all valid. For one thing, people seem to be viewing it as horrible inconsistency instead of brilliant innovation. It is not breaking character, but *developing* it, and character development and maturity occur only as new situations arise and experience is gained by dealing with them. Secondly, this aids the artist who, without the introduction of novelty and the exercise of imagination, will go batty from tedium and find his artwork stunted and stagnant.

No sentient being in any world, real or comic, can develop through endless repetition, not only is variety the spice of life, but the main ingredient of verisimilitude. In "High Society", Cerebus not only matures, but learns lessons that will be an integral component of the decisions he makes in future adventures. In no way can that be wrong - only the thinking that considers it so.

Liz Calhoun
1805 Nebraska
Flint, MI., 48506

Don't she write good? You write real good, lady. I wish I could write like that. Cheee. Seriously, Liz, thank you for the kind words.

Dave & Deni

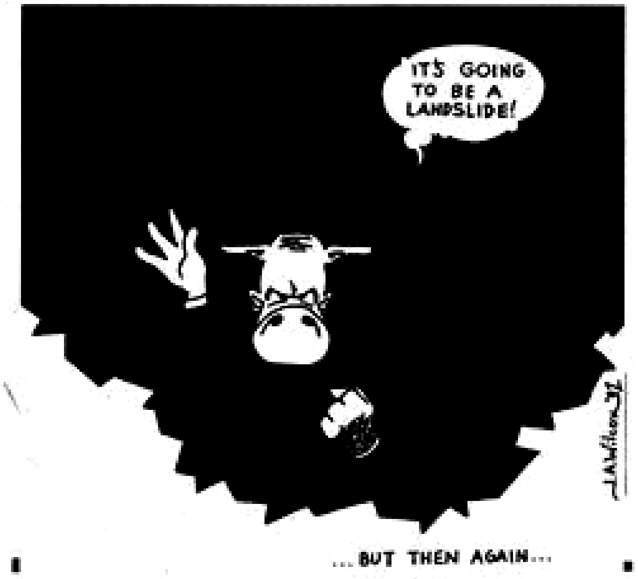
"Campaign" inspired the enclosed illo.

I kept the drawing purposely *stark* and *simple*, as I wanted it to convey a bit of power, with the white of the symbolic "votes" contrasting with the black of the background.

Whether I succeeded or not, I'll leave up to you.

John A. Wilcox
40 Hales Court,
Westport, CT., 06880

John (give me an "A") Wilcox offers an early prediction on the election's outcome edging out the CBS computer by well over a month and a half.


IT'S GOING TO BE A LANDSLIDE!
...BUT THEN AGAIN...

Dear Dave and Deni

We seem to be two-thirds of the way through "High Society" now, and I'm enjoying it thoroughly. I have no idea how it's all going to turn out, and I don't really care to know before the fact, but there's one question that keeps plaguing me - what about the duck? You know, the damn stachoo of a damn duck that Dirty

CEREBUS ORIGINAL ART

I am now offering pages of Cerebus for sale at $100.00 per page. Payment is in U.S. currency for rich Americans, $110.00 Canadian per page for victims of Allan MacEachen's budget. I have issue 30 to the present, complete. I am not selling certain pages (all of # 36, for example). I want to sell a few pages a month, so if they start moving too fast, the price goes up. The pages will be mailed to you after I draw each issue (generally the first of the month). . . . or allow four weeks for delivery if you want to get formal about it. Certified cheques or money orders only, payable to Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc. at the address above. Please list as many alternatives as you can. Sorry, I don't have time to send out lists of whats sold and what isn't. There is no discount for quantity, so please don't ask.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Fleagle sold tuh Big Garn tuh buy some saddle-sore remedy? Yeah, that duck. Dirty Fleagle mentioned it in #39, but we still have no idea how it fits into Sim's Master Plan. Uh - it *does* fit in, doesn't it Dave? I'd hate to have been waiting a whole year (and more) for naught.

Nevertheless, I'm anticipating great stuff in the next ten issues and am looking forward to meeting both of you this October the 14th (assuming I can find a damn job in this damn town, that is).

P.S. Dave's "Tilting" plate for the F.O.O.G. portfolio was very, very nice.

Alan Stewart
2883 Briarcliff Rd. N.E.
Atlanta, GA.

By the time you read this, thanks to the miracle of time-lapse publishing, I will already have met Alan and left again.

Dear Dave Sim,

Contrary to popular rumor, I am not a good-looking 34 year old divorced professional male "verging on an incipient mid-life crisis", but a smartmouthed 24 year old girl in an obstinately-prolonged adolescence. It's a mistake anyone could have made, but there the similarities end. I'm a raging Bohemian, have never been married, and sport a wart on the end of my nose.

Lest the feminists feel slighted, I referred to myself as a "girl" because I have yet to meet "men" and "women". Everyone seems to pretend he/she is grown-up all the while hoping that the real adults, (whoever the hell they are), don't catch on.

P.S. Or am I just cashing in on the fact that it's "in" to be 24 and female?

P.P.S. Zairbuss 4-ever!

Micky DuPree
41 Burnside #2
Somerville, MA., 02144

Dear Dave and Company,

Ah. *This* is more my kind of Cerebus. Economics confuse me. Page 2 is the best campaign speech I've ever read and/or seen. Bran MacMufin isn't *really* a military strategical genius, is he? Oho.

More of Lord Julius! More! More!

Why doesn't the regency elf have pointed ears? Everybody else does.

Until Cerebus finds his bellybutton --------

P.S. Micky DuPree is a little old man. I've known her -- er, him -- ever since high school.

Dian Hardison
LT., USN
Norfolk, VA.

Anyone else want to guess what or who Micky DuPree is?

Dear Dave and Deni

Nothing much has been happening in this end of town recently so I decided I'd write this much-overdo letter before I climb the walls. (It's been real easy to pull that stunt ever since I was bitten by this spider at a physics demonstration. . .) Cerebus has been fantastic lately (!!!) and I'm sure it's gonna keep getting better! Issue #39 had me gurgling in fits of idiocy during my perusal of its pages, (laughing that is) and everyone around me begun to eye me strangely. #40 kept right on going where #39 left off.

In #39 Dave asked if and where he had lost people within his story lines. Well, the only time I experienced "What the hell is going on here?" was after I read #26, the first issue of Cerebus I ever read. This didn't stop me, though, I always give a comic a fair chance. So, needless to say, after I read more of this guy's stories and acquired some back issues, #28 made far more sense. Very complex society this aardvark lives in, n'est-ce pas?

Finally, I thought I'd tell you that I fully support you in your quest to keep the book under *your* control, instead of following *everybody's* requests for Cerebus to do this or Cerebus do that. You appear to be doing just fine as it is and I'm sure you have an outline for Cerebus' future that should keep most fans happy. Cerebus is the best comic around, keep it that way!!!

Ross Johnston
62 Spalding Drive
Hamilton, Ontario
L9B 1H3

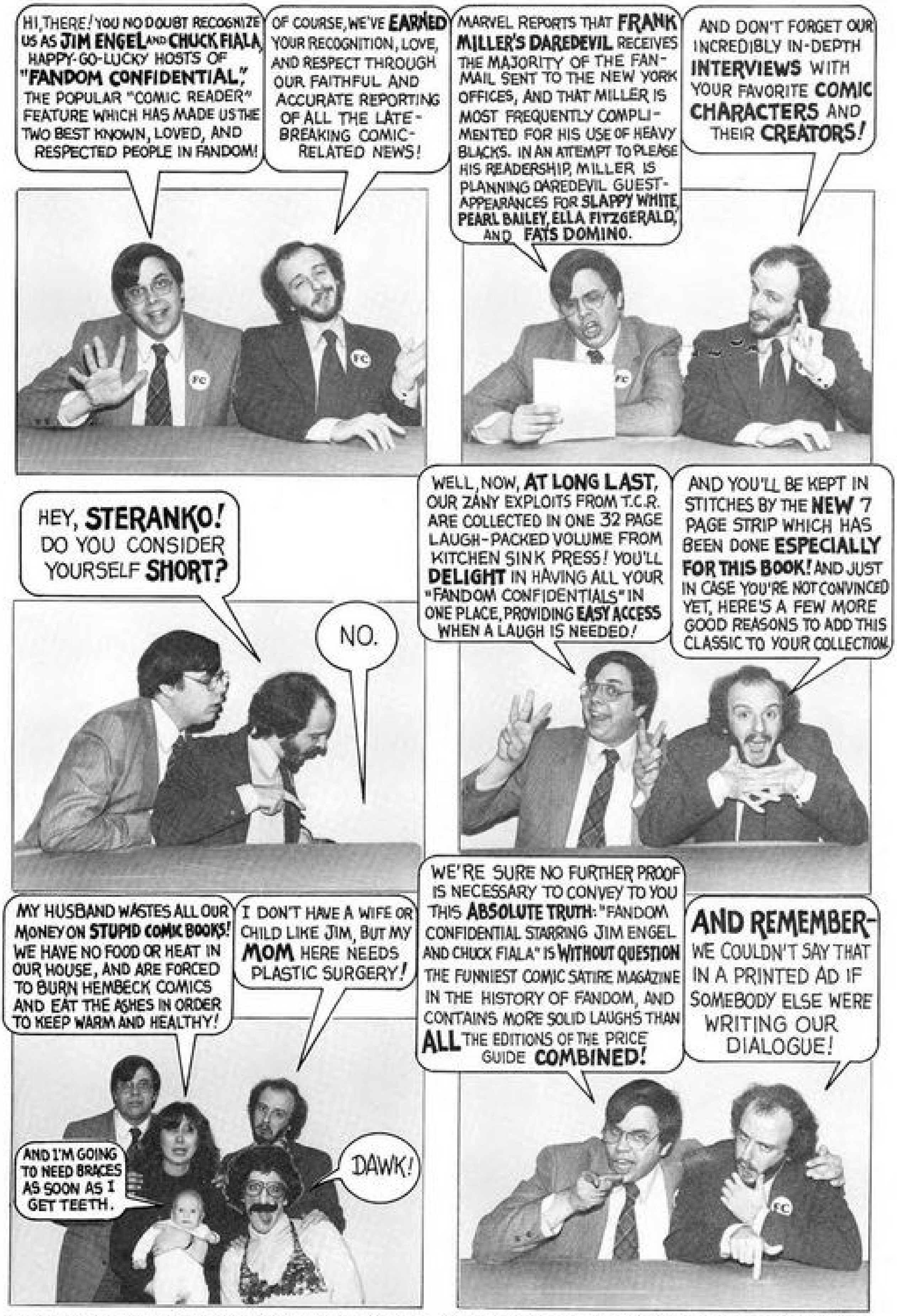
There are people who would never believe someone would buy Cerebus again if number 28 was the first one someone bought. There's a good sentence in there somewhere, believe me.

Dear Dave & Deni,

Enclosed you will find ANOTHER picture of Cerebus, this time from the Chicago Comicon. The person inside the costume is Rose Hille, and was from my camera. I'm sorry it took so long to get it to you, but I had to show it off some. Hope you like it, and maybe I'll have another picture in your letter column.

Terry O'Brien
3911 Stanton,
Fort Wayne, IND., 46815

From Jason Saylor comes this update on Rose Hille -- she won the Best Media award for her Cerebus costume at Inconjunction in Indianapolis. Here she is getting an autograph at the Chicago Con in July. The chap on my right, winking at Cat Yronwode, is Eclipse Publisher, Dean Mullaney.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OF COURSE, WE'VE **EARNED** YOUR RECOGNITION, LOVE, AND RESPECT THROUGH OUR FAITHFUL AND ACCURATE REPORTING OF ALL THE LATE-BREAKING COMIC-RELATED NEWS!
MARVEL REPORTS THAT **FRANK MILLER'S DAREDEVIL** RECEIVES THE MAJORITY OF THE FAN-MAIL SENT TO THE NEW YORK OFFICES, AND THAT MILLER IS MOST FREQUENTLY COMPLIMENTED FOR HIS USE OF HEAVY BLACKS. IN AN ATTEMPT TO PLEASE HIS READERSHIP, MILLER IS PLANNING DAREDEVIL GUEST-APPEARANCES FOR **SLAPPY WHITE, PEARL BAILEY, ELLA FITZGERALD,** AND **FATS DOMINO.**
AND DON'T FORGET OUR INCREDIBLY IN-DEPTH **INTERVIEWS** WITH YOUR FAVORITE **COMIC CHARACTERS** AND THEIR **CREATORS!**
HEY, **STERANKO!** DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF **SHORT?**
NO.
WELL, NOW, **AT LONG LAST**, OUR ZANY EXPLOITS FROM T.C.R. ARE COLLECTED IN ONE 32 PAGE LAUGH-PACKED VOLUME FROM KITCHEN SINK PRESS! YOU'LL **DELIGHT** IN HAVING ALL YOUR "FANDOM CONFIDENTIALS" IN ONE PLACE, PROVIDING **EASY ACCESS** WHEN A LAUGH IS NEEDED!
AND YOU'LL BE KEPT IN STITCHES BY THE **NEW** 7 PAGE STRIP WHICH HAS BEEN DONE **ESPECIALLY FOR THIS BOOK!** AND JUST IN CASE YOU'RE NOT CONVINCED YET, HERE'S A FEW MORE GOOD REASONS TO ADD THIS CLASSIC TO YOUR COLLECTION.
MY HUSBAND WASTES ALL OUR MONEY ON **STUPID COMIC BOOKS!** WE HAVE NO FOOD OR HEAT IN OUR HOUSE, AND ARE FORCED TO BURN HEMBECK COMICS AND EAT THE ASHES IN ORDER TO KEEP WARM AND HEALTHY!
I DON'T HAVE A WIFE OR CHILD LIKE JIM, BUT MY **MOM** HERE NEEDS PLASTIC SURGERY!
AND I'M GOING TO NEED BRACES AS SOON AS I GET TEETH.
DAWK!
WE'RE SURE NO FURTHER PROOF IS NECESSARY TO CONVEY TO YOU THIS **ABSOLUTE TRUTH**: "FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL STARRING JIM ENGEL AND CHUCK FIALA" IS **WITHOUT QUESTION** THE FUNNIEST COMIC SATIRE MAGAZINE IN THE HISTORY OF FANDOM, AND CONTAINS MORE SOLID LAUGHS THAN **ALL** THE EDITIONS OF THE PRICE GUIDE **COMBINED!**
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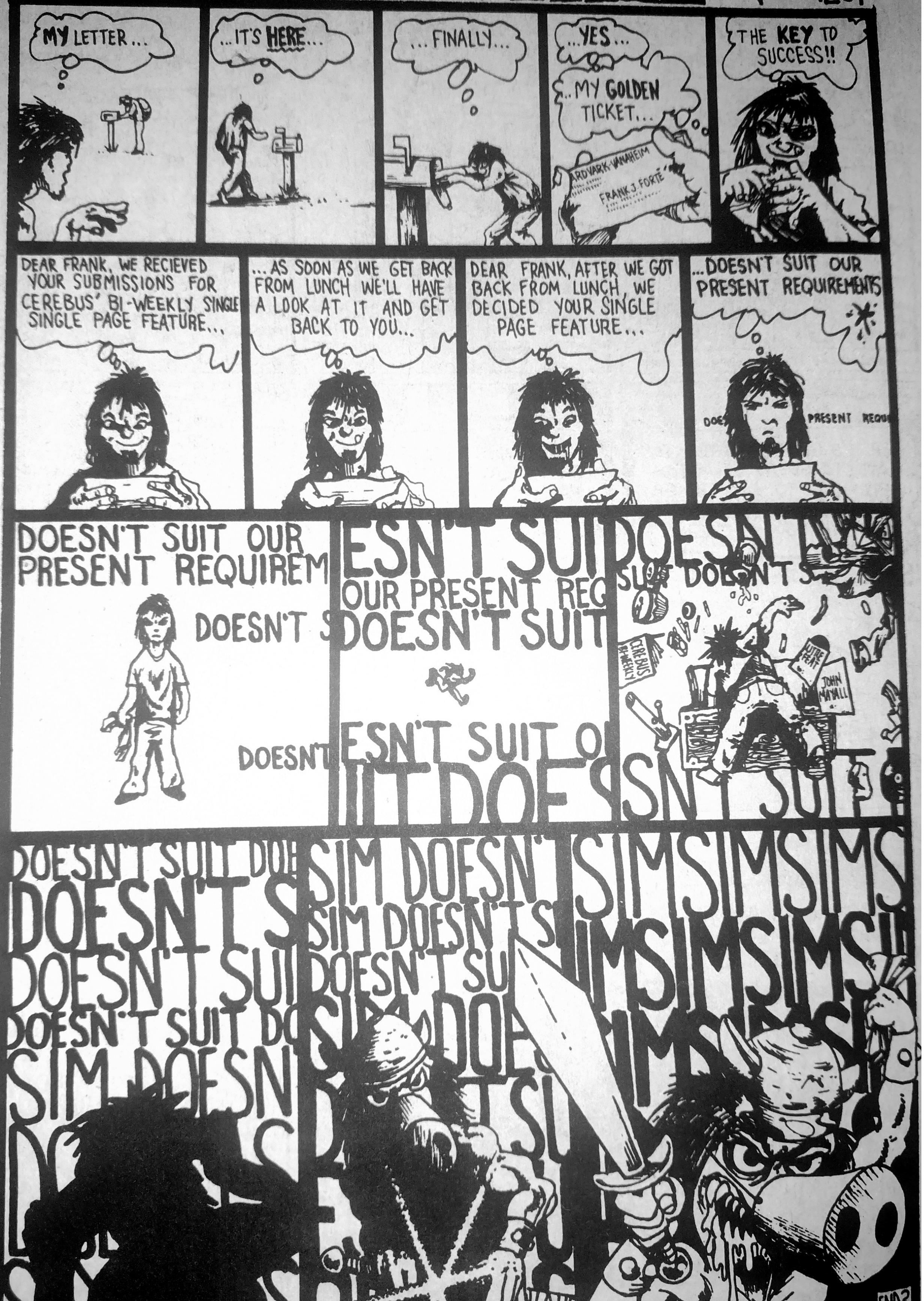
THE SINGLE PAGE

by FORTE 89



MY LETTER...
...IT'S HERE...
...FINALLY...
...YES...
...MY GOLDEN TICKET...
ARDVARK-VANAHEIM
FRANK J. FORTÉ
THE KEY TO SUCCESS!!
DEAR FRANK, WE RECIEVED YOUR SUBMISSIONS FOR CEREBUS' BI-WEEKLY SINGLE SINGLE PAGE FEATURE...,
...AS SOON AS WE GET BACK FROM LUNCH WE'LL HAVE A LOOK AT IT AND GET BACK TO YOU...
DEAR FRANK, AFTER WE GOT BACK FROM LUNCH, WE DECIDED YOUR SINGLE PAGE FEATURE...
...DOESN'T SUIT OUR PRESENT REQUIREMENTS
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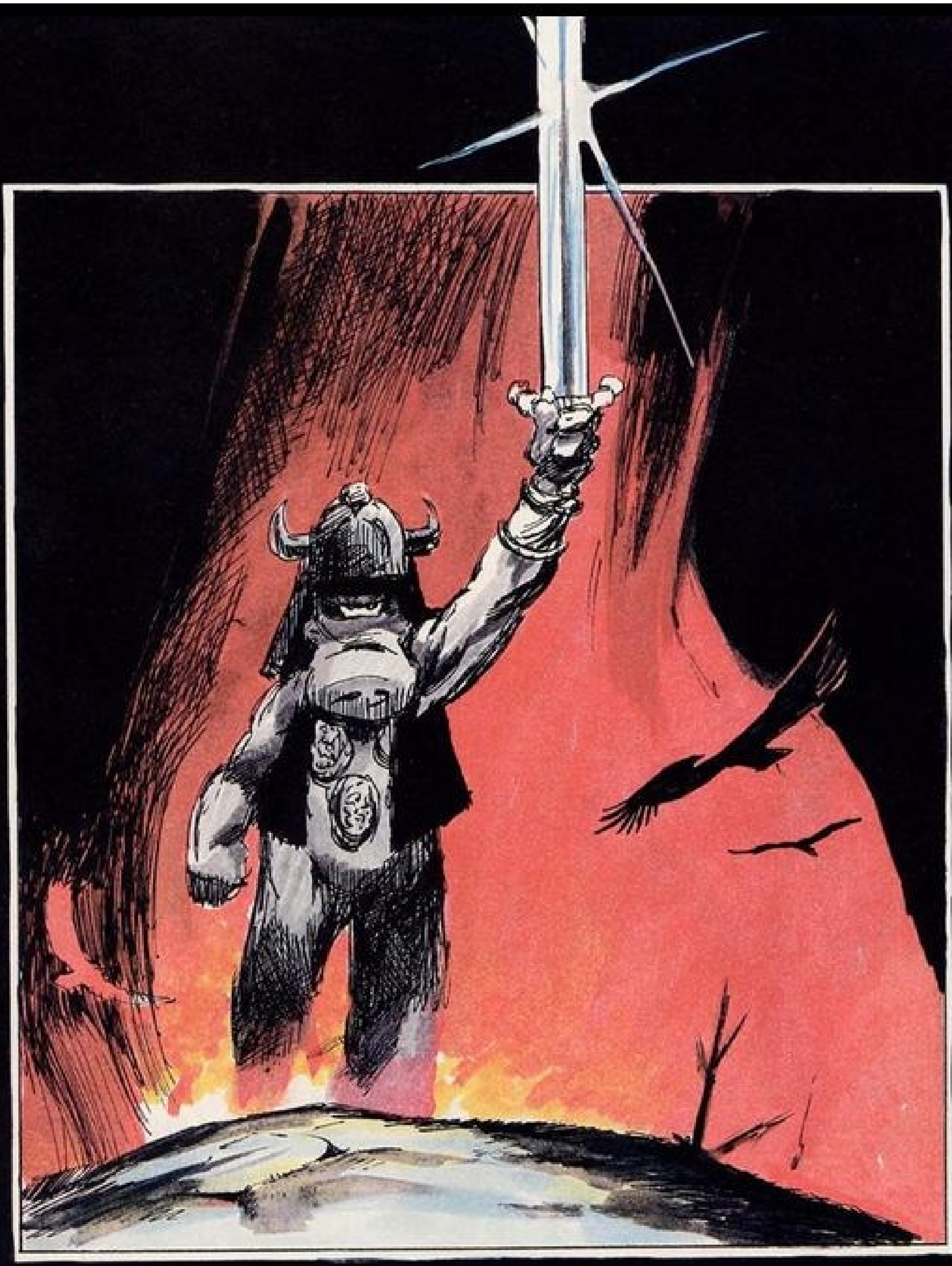

CEREBUS
THE AARDVARK

COMING SOON

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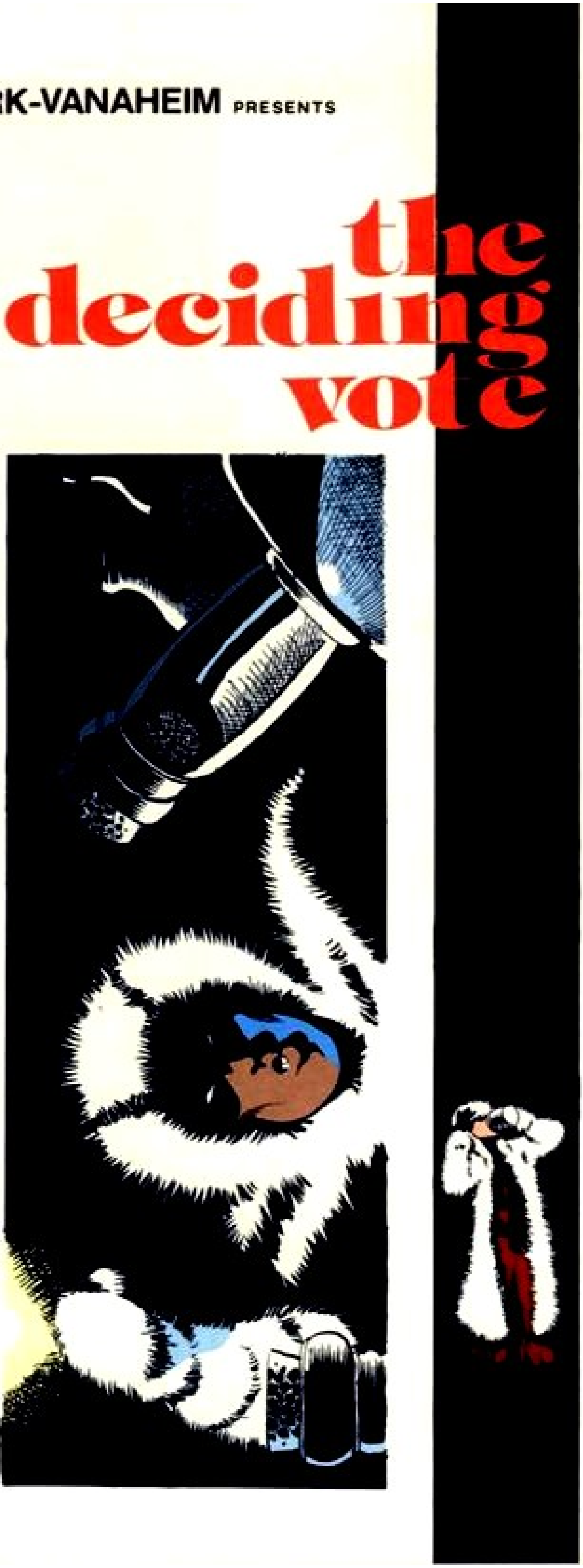
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

the deciding vote



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A Note from the Publisher

GONE

ON

TOUR

Deni

CEREBUS

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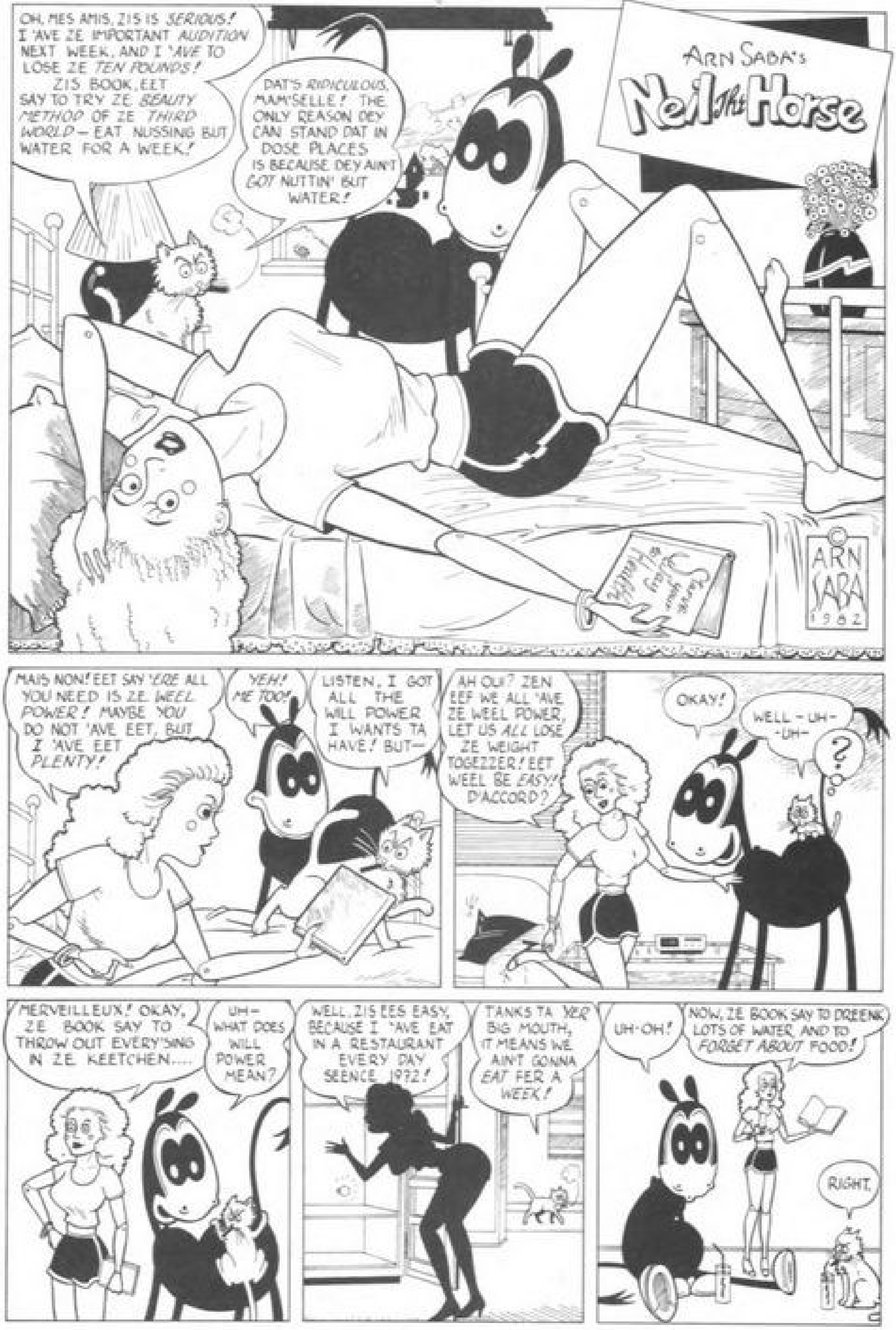
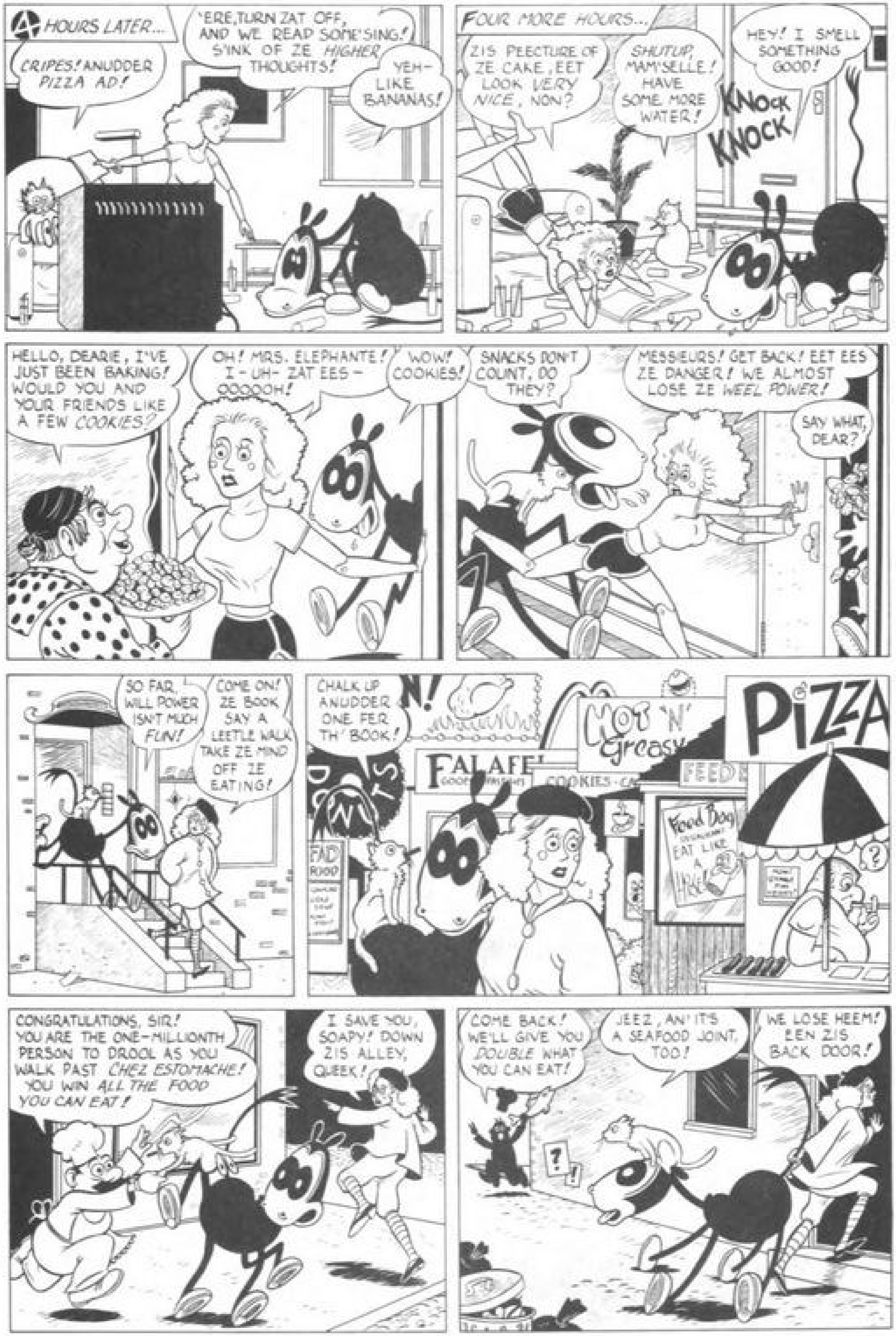
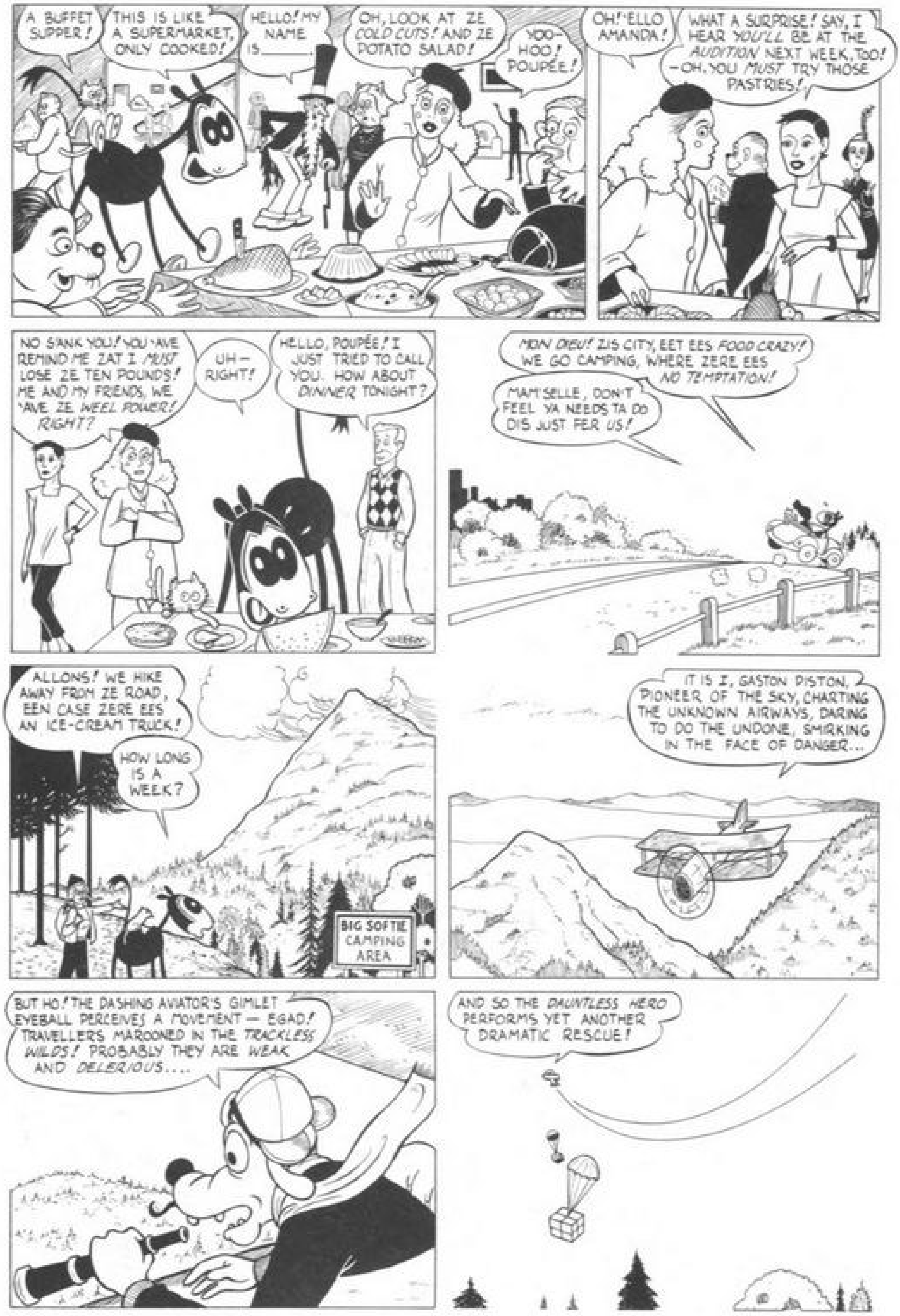
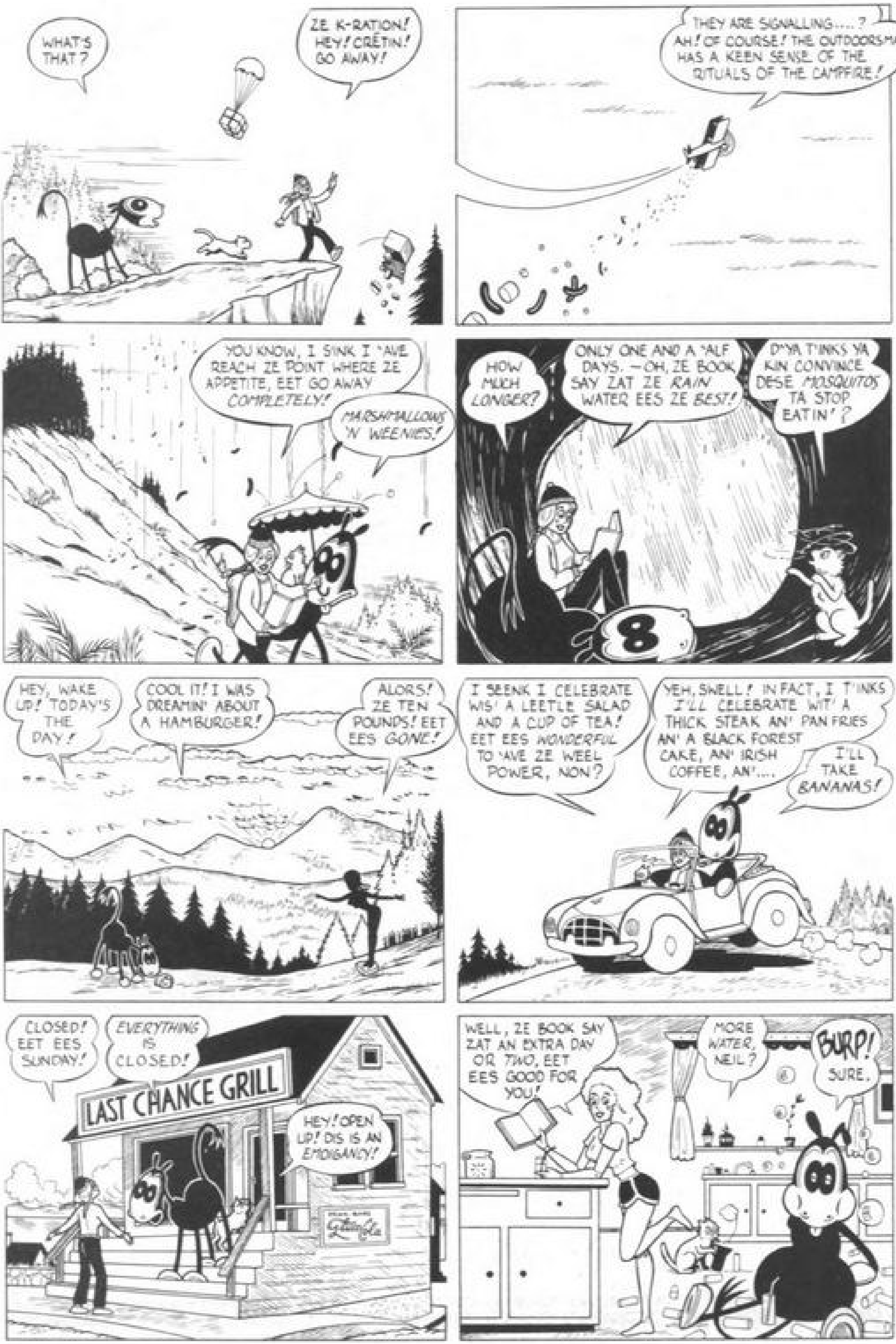

ARN SABA's
Neil the Horse
OH, MES AMIS, ZIS IS *SERIOUS!* I 'AVE ZE IMPORTANT *AUDITION* NEXT WEEK, AND I *'AVE* TO LOSE ZE *TEN POUNDS!* ZIS BOOK, EET SAY TO TRY ZE *BEAUTY METHOD* OF ZE *THIRD WORLD* — EAT NUSSING BUT WATER FOR A WEEK!
DAT'S *RIDICULOUS*, MAM'SELLE! THE ONLY REASON DEY CAN STAND DAT IN DOSE PLACES IS BECAUSE DEY AIN'T *GOT* NUTTIN' BUT WATER!
© ARN SABA 1982
MAIS NON! EET SAY *'ERE* ALL YOU NEED IS ZE *WEEL POWER!* MAYBE *YOU* DO NOT 'AVE EET, BUT *I* 'AVE EET *PLENTY!*
YEH! ME TOO!
LISTEN, I GOT ALL THE WILL POWER I WANTS TA HAVE! BUT—
AH OUI? ZEN EEF WE ALL 'AVE ZE WEEL POWER, LET US *ALL* LOSE ZE WEIGHT TOGEZZER! EET WEEL BE *EASY!* D'ACCORD?
OKAY!
WELL - UH - UH-
?
MERVEILLEUX! OKAY, ZE BOOK SAY TO THROW OUT EVERY'SING IN ZE KEETCHEN....
UH— WHAT DOES WILL POWER MEAN?
WELL, ZIS EES EASY, BECAUSE I 'AVE EAT IN A RESTAURANT EVERY DAY SEENCE 1972!
TANKS TA *YER* BIG MOUTH, IT MEANS WE AIN'T GONNA *EAT* FER A WEEK!
UH-OH!
NOW, ZE BOOK SAY TO DREENK LOTS OF WATER, AND TO *FORGET ABOUT* FOOD!
RIGHT.


4 HOURS LATER...
CRIPES! ANUDDER PIZZA AD!
'ERE, TURN ZAT OFF, AND WE READ SOME'SING! S'INK OF ZE HIGHER THOUGHTS!
YEH- LIKE BANANAS!
FOUR MORE HOURS...
ZIS PEECTURE OF ZE CAKE, EET LOOK VERY NICE, NON?
SHUTUP, MAM'SELLE! HAVE SOME MORE WATER!
HEY! I SMELL SOMETHING GOOD!
KNOCK KNOCK
HELLO, DEARIE, I'VE JUST BEEN BAKING! WOULD YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS LIKE A FEW COOKIES?
OH! MRS. ELEPHANTE! I-UH- ZAT EES- OOOOOH!
WOW! COOKIES!
SNACKS DON'T COUNT, DO THEY?
MESSIEURS! GET BACK! EET EES ZE DANGER! WE ALMOST LOSE ZE WEEL POWER!
SAY WHAT, DEAR?
SO FAR, WILL POWER ISN'T MUCH FUN!
COME ON! ZE BOOK SAY A LEETLE WALK TAKE ZE MIND OFF ZE EATING!
CHALK UP ANUDDER ONE FER TH' BOOK!
FALAFEL
HOT 'N' GREASY
COOKIES · CA
FEED
PIZZA
FAD FOOD
Food Boy
EAT LIKE A
?
CONGRATULATIONS, SIR! YOU ARE THE ONE-MILLIONTH PERSON TO DROOL AS YOU WALK PAST CHEZ ESTOMACHE! YOU WIN ALL THE FOOD YOU CAN EAT!
I SAVE YOU, SOAPY! DOWN ZIS ALLEY, QUEEK!
COME BACK! WE'LL GIVE YOU DOUBLE WHAT YOU CAN EAT!
JEEZ, AN' IT'S A SEAFOOD JOINT, TOO!
WE LOSE HEEM! EEN ZIS BACK DOOR!
?!


A BUFFET SUPPER!
THIS IS LIKE A SUPERMARKET, ONLY COOKED!
HELLO! MY NAME IS ______.
OH, LOOK AT ZE *COLD CUTS!* AND ZE POTATO SALAD!
YOO-HOO! POUPÉE!
OH! 'ELLO AMANDA!
WHAT A SURPRISE! SAY, I HEAR *YOU'LL* BE AT THE *AUDITION* NEXT WEEK, TOO! —OH, YOU *MUST* TRY THOSE PASTRIES!
NO S'ANK YOU! YOU 'AVE REMIND ME ZAT I *MUST* LOSE ZE TEN POUNDS! ME AND MY FRIENDS, WE 'AVE ZE *WEEL POWER! RIGHT?*
UH— RIGHT!
HELLO, POUPÉE! I JUST TRIED TO CALL YOU. HOW ABOUT *DINNER* TONIGHT?
MON DIEU! ZIS CITY, EET EES *FOOD CRAZY!* WE GO CAMPING, WHERE ZERE EES *NO TEMPTATION!*
MAM'SELLE, DON'T FEEL YA NEEDS TA DO DIS JUST FER *US!*
ALLONS! WE HIKE AWAY FROM ZE ROAD, EEN CASE ZERE EES AN ICE-CREAM TRUCK!
HOW LONG IS A WEEK?
BIG SOFTIE CAMPING AREA
IT IS I, GASTON PISTON, PIONEER OF THE SKY, CHARTING THE UNKNOWN AIRWAYS, DARING TO DO THE UNDONE, SMIRKING IN THE FACE OF DANGER...
BUT HO! THE DASHING AVIATOR'S GIMLET EYEBALL PERCEIVES A MOVEMENT — EGAD! TRAVELLERS MAROONED IN THE *TRACKLESS WILDS!* PROBABLY THEY ARE *WEAK* AND *DELERIOUS*....
AND SO THE *DAUNTLESS HERO* PERFORMS YET ANOTHER DRAMATIC RESCUE!


WHAT'S THAT?
ZE K-RATION! HEY! CRÉTIN! GO AWAY!
THEY ARE SIGNALLING....? AH! OF COURSE! THE OUTDOORSMAN HAS A KEEN SENSE OF THE RITUALS OF THE CAMPFIRE!
YOU KNOW, I SINK I 'AVE REACH ZE POINT WHERE ZE APPETITE, EET GO AWAY COMPLETELY!
MARSHMALLOWS 'N WEENIES!
HOW MUCH LONGER?
ONLY ONE AND A 'ALF DAYS. —OH, ZE BOOK SAY ZAT ZE RAIN WATER EES ZE BEST!
D'YA T'INKS YA KIN CONVINCE DESE MOSQUITOS TA STOP EATIN'?
HEY, WAKE UP! TODAY'S THE DAY!
COOL IT! I WAS DREAMIN' ABOUT A HAMBURGER!
ALORS! ZE TEN POUNDS! EET EES GONE!
I SEENK I CELEBRATE WIS' A LEETLE SALAD AND A CUP OF TEA! EET EES WONDERFUL TO 'AVE ZE WEEL POWER, NON?
YEH, SWELL! IN FACT, I T'INKS I'LL CELEBRATE WIT' A THICK STEAK AN' PAN FRIES AN' A BLACK FOREST CAKE, AN' IRISH COFFEE, AN'....
I'LL TAKE BANANAS!
CLOSED! EET EES SUNDAY!
EVERYTHING IS CLOSED!
LAST CHANCE GRILL
HEY! OPEN UP! DIS IS AN EMOIGANCY!
WELL, ZE BOOK SAY ZAT AN EXTRA DAY OR TWO, EET EES GOOD FOR YOU!
MORE WATER, NEIL?
BURP! SURE.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave:

Issue 40 is your best in a long while. Not only did you manage to pick up the pace considerably, but your blend of humour and -- for lack of a better word -- serious plot elements was very skilfull. The political machinations in the foreground of the story were perfectly contrasted by the idiot sibling yells of Dirty Drew and Dirty Fleagle, and the Moon Roach's running mental narration. The Moon Roach is probably your most on-target satire -- a perfect harpooning of overdone Marvel melodrama.

Meanwhile Cerebus is beginning to adapt more readily to his new, more subtle role as politician. Starting last issue, when Cerebus negotiated with Blakely without Astoria's help (which may or may not turn out to be helpful help in the long run), he has stepped more into the forefront of the action -- as symbolized by #40's cover -- Cerebus surrounded by his entourage, clearly at the centre of things. Your comment on politics is made so much more effective by having Cerebus actually want the wealth and power of the Prime Ministership -- shown by the Aardvarkian Empire page. Much more valid a comment than Howard the Duck's run for office in 1976 -- Howard never succumbed to ambition, but Cerebus, the protagonist of the story, does. This reveals the real problem with politics -- that well-meaning, idealistic people get into it, and then get their priorities, and often their morality, warped by the need to maintain, or in Cerebus' case, gain power.

Speaking of politics, I have a few minor quibbles (quibble; quibble;) with the economic/political situation you have created. Iest is currently in a massive recession caused by a too-massive deficit (hmmm . . . sounds familiar -- will Cerebus learn the Trudeau salute if elected?). However, in an answer to a letter asking about the Art Deco architecture, you said that it was due to the rising merchant class' demand for work from artisans used to producing religious artifacts. My question is, how can you have a rising merchant class, which implies (or is that infers?) a great deal of money in the middle of a recession, which is notable for a lack of money? I'd also argue with the existence of a democracy in a medieval-type setting, but this issue reveals that it really isn't democratic, the votes being controlled more or less by the wealthy, and, anyway, it gives you a chance to satirize present politics.

I'm glad the pace has speeded up -- there are four or five sequences in the latest issue rather than just one. My major complaint with the "High Society" series has been its generally snail-like pacing. Slow pacing is an effective device -- you used it very well in #36's conversation between Jaka and Cerebus -- but only in contrast to faster or at least medium pacing. A prime example of this was last issue's offering. The whole thing was a long conversation which did little to advance plot or characterization, punctuated by a gratuitous fight between the Moon Roach and Dirty Fleagle & Dirty Drew.

The fight brings up my main complaint with the latest issue, or more accurately, the space between issues. How did the Dirty Bros. go from being unconscious felons on the carpet in #39 to Cerebus' bodyguards in #40? Why is the Moon Roach hanging around with them when last issue he thought that they were members of the Red Claw? How did Bran MacMufin and Astoria join forces? Why is Bran now Cerebus' choice for military advisor when in the past Cerebus thought of him only as a crackpot? None of these questions are unanswerable -- but they should have been answered. Characterization is very important, and characters should have their relationships to each other as well as their relationships to Cerebus established. The space taken up by the conversation with Blakely could have been filled up with this information. As it stands, this is the biggest lapse between issues since Cerebus ended #13 walking off into the sunset carrying a holy symbol on Terim, and began #14 being carried into the city of Palnu as a hero. Often I begin a Cerebus wondering whether I have missed an issue, which is especially disquieting, since I subscribe.

Still, I'm enjoying the "High Society" series more and more as it goes on, even though it seems that my short grey furry hero is heading for quite a fall. His adaption to the role of politico is only going to increase the height of that fall -- I suspect that he is going to get very comfortable, only to get the rug pulled out from under him. Julius is running a goat against him in the background of the story. Julius just uses a front of foolishness to get what he wants -- and we have yet to see Julius fail. Cerebus has made the mistake of underestimating him before -- notably when he was planning with Gudre to storm Palnu -- and may be about to do so again. And we have yet to get the full story from Astoria -- we know she's hiding profits from Cerebus, and she's likely hiding more. And what is her relationship to Julius? I have the sinking feeling that Cerebus' lack of curiosity on this will lead to his downfall.

Which leads us to the Unique Stories. I enjoyed Goat, but it was really an extra three pages of Cerebus -- sorry, four. Not that I mind an extra four pages of Cerebus in the slightest -- I wish you could do it every month. Other than Goat, I admired Welcome to Heaven, Doctor Franklin because of its offbeat plot and humour -- it was truly a Unique Story. However, the Salamander two-parter was unattractive and incomprehensible, and the Slark was essentially what Harbour Ellison calls a fuzzy-footed fairy story. If Bill Loebs was to come up with a viable concept for a series to be published by Aardvark-Vanaheim, I'd buy it -- or perhaps you

CEREBUS ORIGINAL ART

I am now offering pages of Cerebus for sale at $100.00 per page. Payment is in U.S. currency for rich Americans, $110.00 Canadian per page for victims of Allan MacEachen's budget. I have issue 30 to the present, complete. I am not selling certain pages (all of # 36, for example). I want to sell a few pages a month, so if they start moving too fast, the price goes up. The pages will be mailed to you after I draw each issue (generally the first of the month). . . . or allow four weeks for delivery if you want to get formal about it. Certified cheques or money orders only, payable to Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc. at the address above. Please list as many alternatives as you can. Sorry, I don't have time to send out lists of whats sold and what isn't. There is no discount for quantity, so please don't ask.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

could try an anthology title. A series would likely be better received, financially, though, as the death of things like Star*Reach and the continued life of Cerebus points out. Well, I'm running out of wind, out of space on the page, and ink on my typewriter ribbon, so good luck, keep turning out the best comic around (and the only comic I read), and avoid otters bearing nuclear weapons.

Robin D. Laws
315 John Street
Orillia, Ontario
L3V 3J3

The merchant class is very much like today's corporations. More and more of Iest's assets are in the hands of the Import-Export traders. Consequently, although the Iestan crown is worth less because the government is printing paper to represent gold it doesn't have, a larger and larger share is staying with the middleman, who, being a cautious sort (which is how he's managed to stay afloat) raises his prices while paying his suppliers less. As his taxes are increased to service a larger and larger government debt, he raises prices even higher as everyone competes to stay ahead of inflation. Because he is determining the flow of money on the basis of his business instincts, we see the first instances of investment money being drawn to certain city-states with pro-business policies (i.e. Palnu -- "Gouge the people and we'll back you to the hilt") and repelled by city-states with anti-business policies (i.e. Iest with the Inquisition burning wealthy merchants as heretics). The money supply dries up . . . bread costs twelve times as much as it did last week . . . rents skyrocket, the value of the currency goes down because no one wants it. The business people who stay behind to operate the black market are all buying Palnan currency so they don't get overwhelmed as things go from bad to worse. Rare antiques, gold rings, objets d'art are traded for bread and soup, and are sold elsewhere in preferred funds -- Palnan, Tcapmin etc. When times are tough, the big fish just get bigger as they devour more fish.

Thank you for your king words.

Dear Dave

I started reading Cerebus with issue 6 and it has been a real pleasure seeing the series develop to it's current stage. However, whereas your artwork has continued to improve steadily, the stories run the whole gamut from hilarious to boring, from witty and sometimes incisive commentaries to (the occasional) laboured and clichéd diatribes. One thing you haven't been, though, is predictable. You've taken chances, refused to adopt a particular formula, and gone where your own judgement has led you rather than be too swayed by criticisms and appraisals. (At least, that's how it seems to me.)

Which brings me to my main reason for writing this letter, namely my current dissatisfaction with the direction you now seem to be firmly aimed at. The last half-dozen or so issues have been exceedingly brief, haven't advanced the plot significantly, and give the impression of fragments rather than continuing episodes. Nothing much seems to happen, some scenes are tiresomely drawn-out and worst of all, Cerebus has taken a back seat in more ways than one.

Each issue the poor little guy is either moping around feeling sorry for himself, getting irritable and petty, or being humiliated and manipulated in a society in which he clearly does not fit. Nor does it stop there. Your artistic ability has increased so much lately, that your people exhibit a far greater and more subtle range of expressions than a funny-animal aardvark could ever hope to. Whereas at one time Cerebus was the most expressive and artistically-interesting figure to watch, he now seems rather ridiculous in comparison to the humans. We've seen all his expressions many times before; he is no longer visually interesting.

Getting back to my dissatisfaction with the story, my main complaint is that I no longer feel I've read an issue. It seems that today's two most innovative comics (Daredevil being the other) both show a considerable literary deficiency, as well as a tendency towards artistic repetitiveness. Not only does the story suffer, but the artwork loses it's effectiveness because it is forced to carry too much of the burden. I'm sure this is a problem you're well aware of though, and I look forward to seeing how you deal with it in future issues.

Adrian Shelley
40E Hyland Close
Hornchurch, Essex
RMII IDX
England

I keep doing my best, Adrian

Dear Dave & Deni,

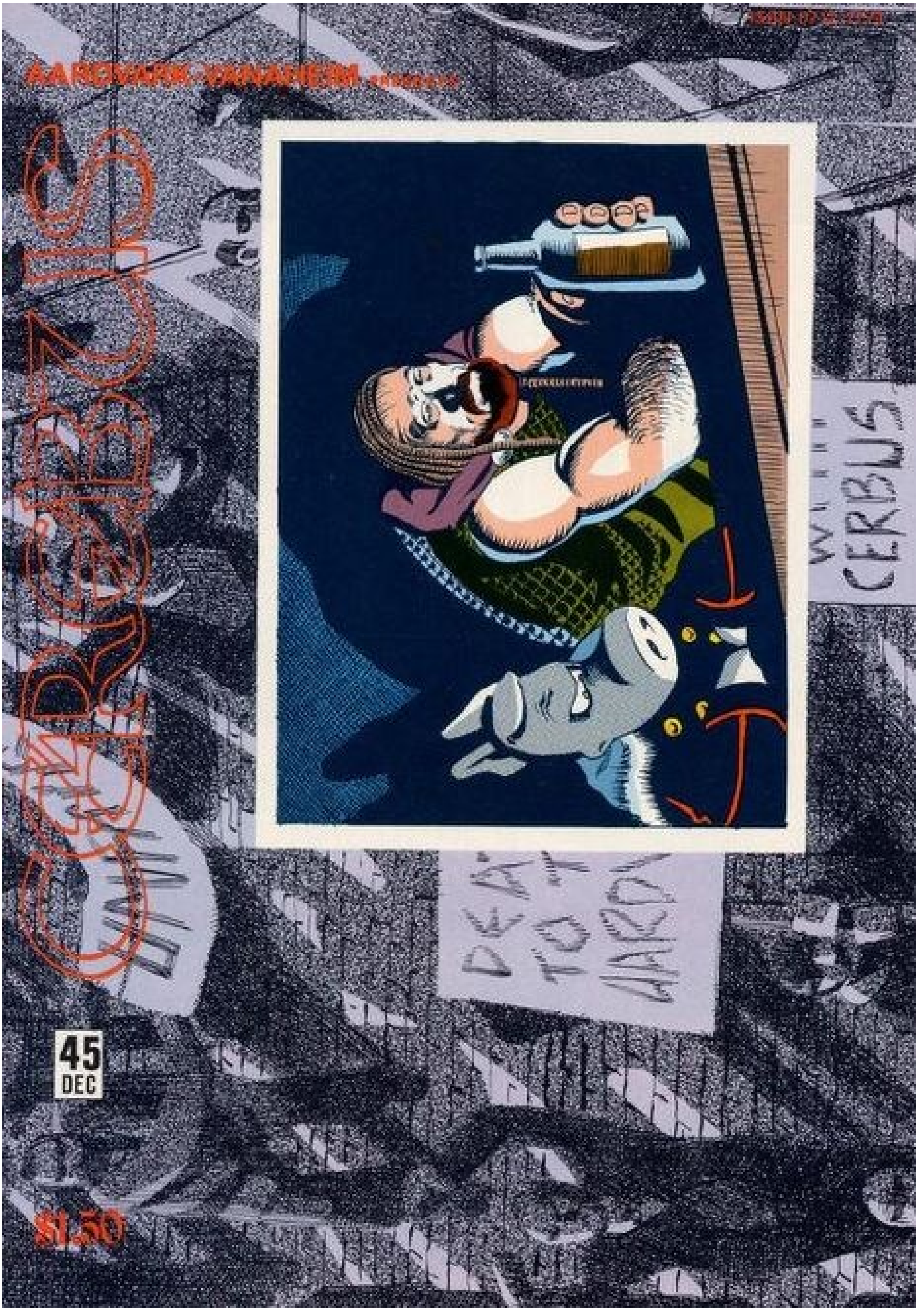
It was just a few short months ago that I discovered Cerebus (iss. #35) and I have been hooked on it ever since. I recently spent all my money on back issues. Since I live in the Virgin Islands, though, they are almost non-existent. Then I thought to myself "Why let such a superb comic go to waste here or anywhere else for that matter," so I set out to spread the word that a fabulous new comic had been made. The first person I told didn't seem very impressed so I handed him a copy. It was love at first sight. He soon became a rabid Cerebus collector and we both started telling people about it. We plan to have the whole V.I. reading it in no time. Also since Cerebus is definitely not for a select audience, we plan to make Cerebus the Virgin Islands' best selling comic.

P.S. If you ever decide to come down on vacation (the V.I. are an excellent spot for a vacation) drop me a line.

Travis Holub
Red Hook Shopping Cts. Box 61
St. Thomas, U.S.V.I., 00802

Watch for our 1984 U.S. Virgin Islands tour. Sun glasses optional. Cocktails at eight.

Dave Sim being famous at the 1982 Canadian Tour (Now & Then Books)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A Note from the Publisher

As you can see, Dave and I survived our tour and are back with another issue. We hadn't known what to expect when we left, but the whole tour turned out to be a really nice surprise. I would like to thank all the shop owners and the folks who worked with them for making our tour so easy for us. We really enjoyed the conversations we had with all our readers who showed up at the shops. I was constantly surprised at how much comics is growing, and the shops and readers along with it.

All of the shops were run in a very professional manner. We saw many different shops, some that looked closer to the traditional book-store, and some in malls. The whole idea of putting a comic shop in a mall was totally new to us, and I think to comics as a whole. From what we could see of it, the experiment seems to be working well. On the east coast, for example, Steve Geppi has several shops which he keeps supplied from his distribution system. His high-volume sales from his shop in Harbor Place are a good sign that selling comics to your average walk-in customer may have come of age.

Buddy Saunders in Dallas, Texas, told us about all the information he received about surrounding population, age group and how close schools are to the shop before moving to his Dallas location. These guys are truly businessmen. And then there was Chuck Rozanski in Denver, Colorado. Chuck is what one would call your not-so-average shop owner. He has a college business degree and runs his Three Mile-High shops like a well-oiled machine. Nothing is left to chance, and the sales in his shops show it. The result of all this new thinking?

It seems to me that everyone involved in comics, from the artists and writers, to the publishers and distributors on through to the shop owners and readers are going through a lot of growing pains right now. We are no longer the "Mom-and-Pop" medium that we mostly were when Cerebus began. I know that those changes are uncomfortable for some - but I feel that in the long run we will all benefit so much from it.

For those of you who feel that all these changes are making comics too "commercial" it would be a good idea to take note of this. Cerebus, Elfquest, and most of the alternative titles would not be doing as well as we are if it was not for the efforts made by these shops. Those high-volume sales include Cerebus, and I found that the shop owners and their staff feel pride in the fact that they make a lot of personal pitches for our books. They are out there showing our hard work to new readers.

With all these new companies and new titles finding more space in the newer, brighter shops, artists are having more of a choice in finding the right situation in which to do their books. It's only natural that the outcome of this will be more varied and better produced comic books. As the readership grows out of this new interest, a natural by-product is going to have to be better pay for the artists, and a greater attraction to comics by artists who had to leave the field and take their talents elsewhere for either reasons of artistic integrity or just plain economic survival.

Ever since I began working with Dave on Cerebus, I've heard so much about North American comic books being treated like third-rate entertainment. On the other hand, I heard a lot about the respect this artform has in Europe. On the tour I found myself wondering if perhaps that attitude was beginning to get a footing in the United States. Perhaps the time has come to take our comics out of the closets and into the living room. If we truly understand and appreciate this outstanding combination of words and art that is sometimes referred to as "funny books", then maybe it's time to show their magic to others. After all, we heard of a White House aide who buys comics at a comic shop near Washington, D.C.; and when Dave and I met TV producer Arne Sultan (of Too Close for Comfort) he had a copy of the Spirit right in his office. So, as you can see, the tour was actually a very good way for me to discover many of the changes that comics, as a whole, is going through.

I really am looking forward to next year's tour. I hope that I will have the chance to make some new acquaintances as well as renew those we made on this year's tour. Until that time -- I think that I will be more than happy to settle for seeing how our little grey friend likes being prime minister . . . . .

Deni

CEREBUS

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Deni Sim

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P.O. Box 1886
Grass Valley, CA 95945

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P.O. Box 99217
San Diego, CA 92109

Glenwood Distribution
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Collinsville, IL 62234

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Andromeda Publications
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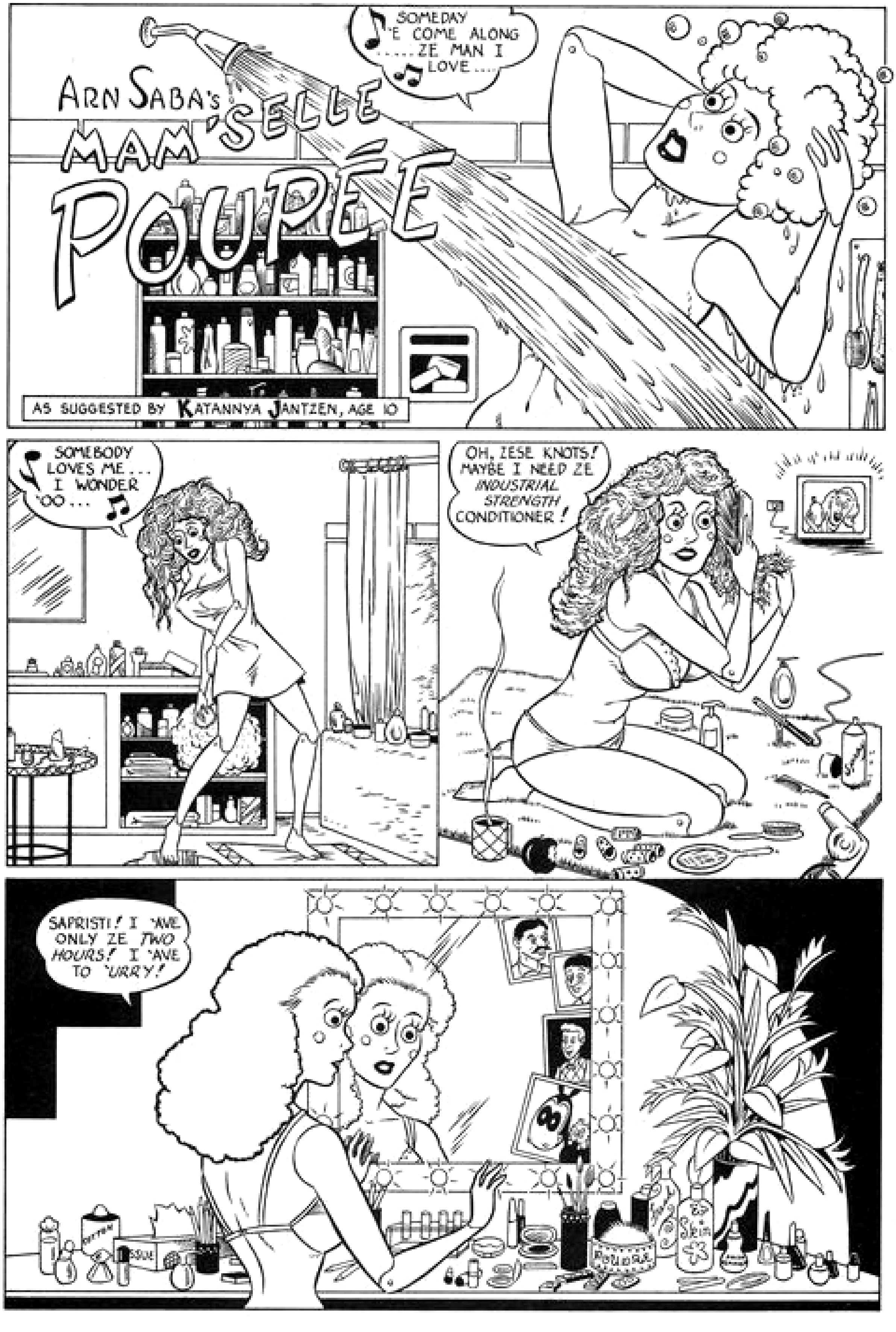
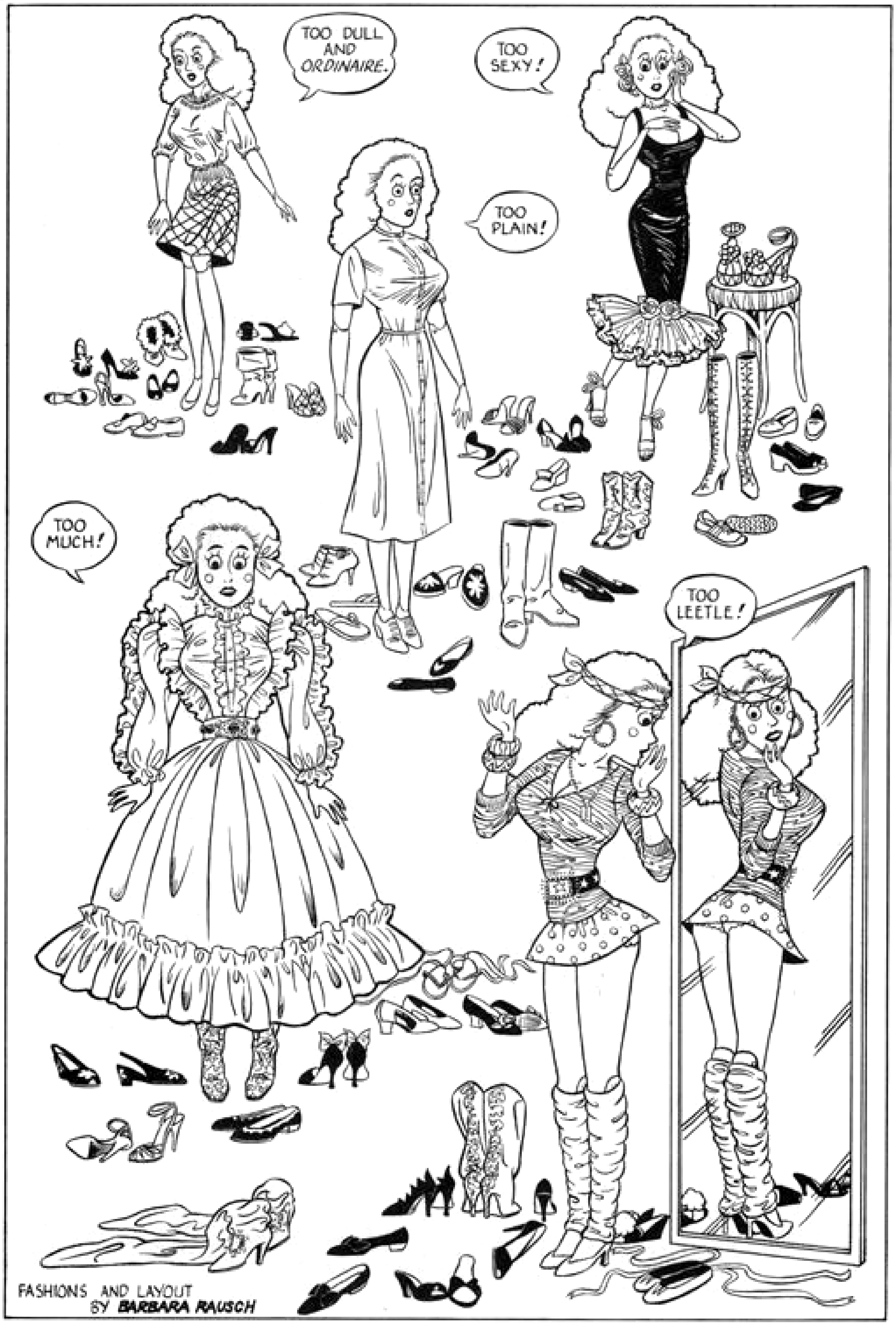
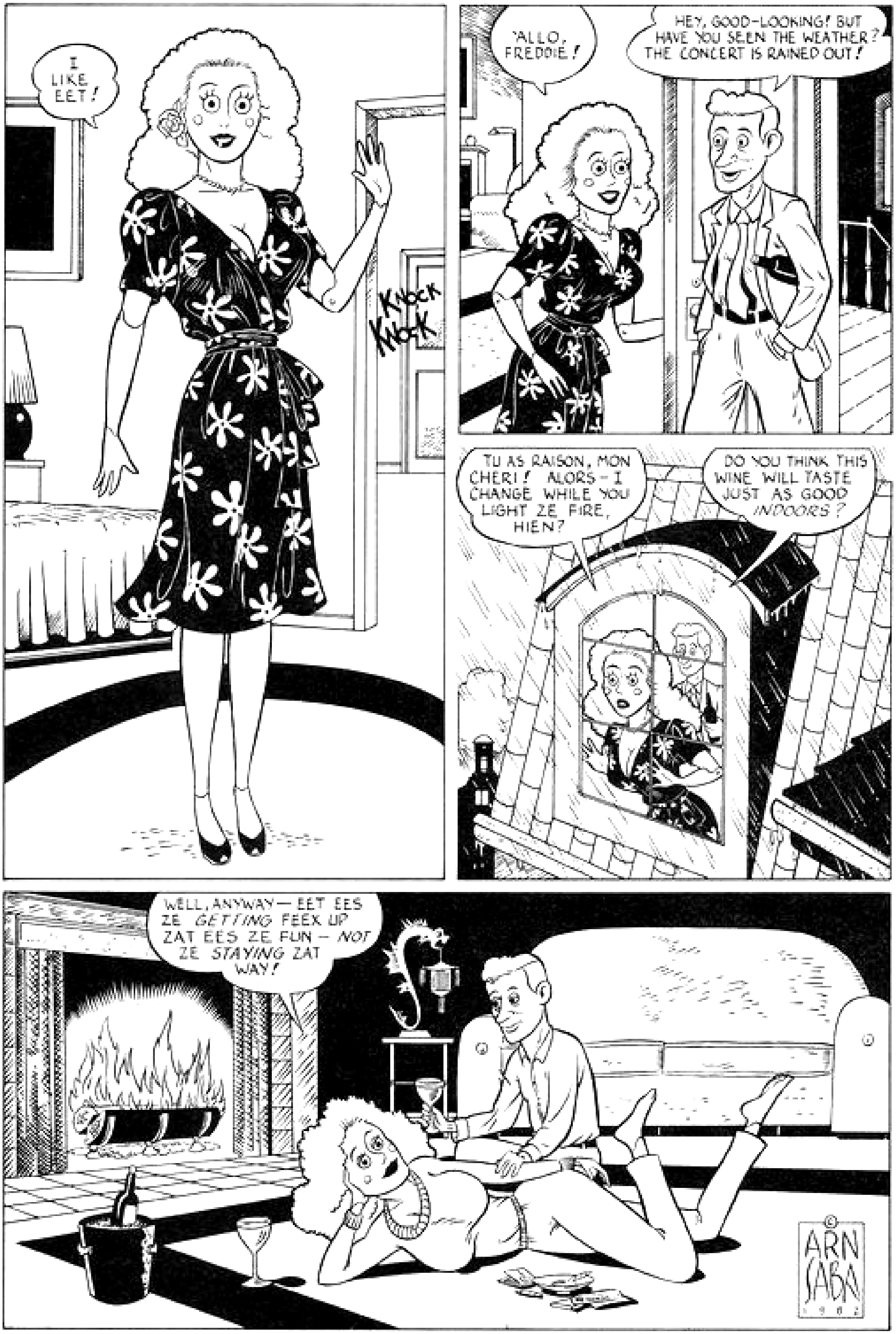
A UNIQUE STORY


ARN SABA's
MAM'SELLE POUPÉE
SOMEDAY 'E COME ALONG .....ZE MAN I LOVE....
AS SUGGESTED BY KATANNYA JANTZEN, AGE 10
SOMEBODY LOVES ME... I WONDER 'OO...
OH, ZESE KNOTS! MAYBE I NEED ZE *INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH* CONDITIONER!
SAPRISTI! I 'AVE ONLY ZE *TWO HOURS!* I 'AVE TO 'URRY!
COTTON
TISSUE


TOO DULL AND *ORDINAIRE.*
TOO SEXY!
TOO PLAIN!
TOO MUCH!
TOO LEETLE!

FASHIONS AND LAYOUT
BY **BARBARA RAUSCH**


I LIKE EET!
KNOCK KNOCK
'ALLO, FREDDIE!
HEY, GOOD-LOOKING! BUT HAVE YOU SEEN THE WEATHER? THE CONCERT IS RAINED OUT!
TU AS RAISON, MON CHERI! ALORS—I CHANGE WHILE YOU LIGHT ZE FIRE, HIEN?
DO YOU THINK THIS WINE WILL TASTE JUST AS GOOD *INDOORS?*
WELL, ANYWAY— EET EES ZE *GETTING* FEEX UP ZAT EES ZE FUN — *NOT* ZE *STAYING* ZAT WAY!
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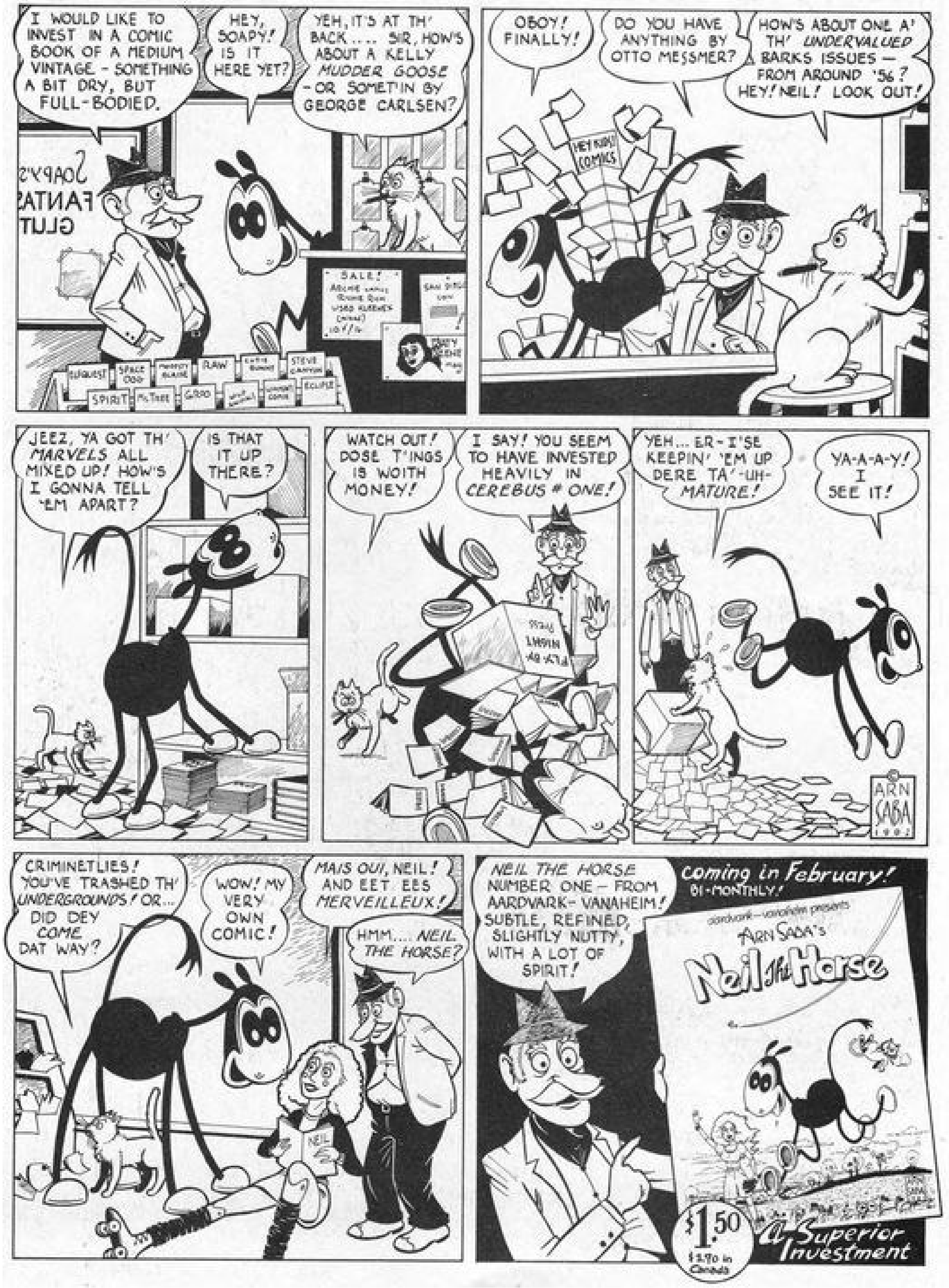
INKING BY **WARREN GREENWOOD**

ARN SABA's Neil The Horse ADVERTISES HIMSELF!?!


I WOULD LIKE TO INVEST IN A COMIC BOOK OF A MEDIUM VINTAGE - SOMETHING A BIT DRY, BUT FULL-BODIED.
HEY, SOAPY! IS IT HERE YET?
YEH, IT'S AT TH' BACK.... SIR, HOW'S ABOUT A KELLY *MUDDER GOOSE* -OR SOMET'IN BY GEORGE CARLSEN?
SALE!
RAW
STEVE CANYON
SPIRIT
GROO
ECLIPSE
OBOY! FINALLY!
DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING BY OTTO MESSMER?
HOW'S ABOUT ONE A' TH' *UNDERVALUED* BARKS ISSUES — FROM AROUND '56? HEY! NEIL! LOOK OUT!
HEY KIDS! COMICS
JEEZ, YA GOT TH' *MARVELS* ALL MIXED UP! HOW'S I GONNA TELL 'EM APART?
IS THAT IT UP THERE?
WATCH OUT! DOSE T'INGS IS WOITH MONEY!
I SAY! YOU SEEM TO HAVE INVESTED HEAVILY IN *CEREBUS # ONE!*
YEH... ER - I'SE KEEPIN' 'EM UP DERE TA' -UH- *MATURE!*
YA-A-A-Y! I SEE IT!
ARN SABA
CRIMINETLIES! YOU'VE TRASHED TH' *UNDERGROUNDS!* OR... DID DEY *COME* DAT WAY?
WOW! MY VERY OWN COMIC!
MAIS OUI, NEIL! AND EET EES MERVEILLEUX!
HMM.... *NEIL THE HORSE?*
NEIL
NEIL THE HORSE NUMBER ONE — FROM AARDVARK-VANAHEIM! SUBTLE, REFINED, SLIGHTLY NUTTY, WITH A LOT OF SPIRIT!
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AARDVARK COMMENT

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NOTES

Well, here we are back again after our whirlwind five week tour of the Great Republic. We had a wonderful time and were well-received everywhere. We made a lot of new friends, had a chance to see a few old friends, did more than a dozen interviews and met (Deni estimates) about six to ten percent of the Cerebus readership. I am exhausted writing this after having arrived back late in the month for starting a new issue. The tour itself was a breeze compared to keeping a monthly comic book on schedule. We'll have more to say about the tour in the months to come and we'd like to remind everyone to send their photographs, interviews, xeroxes of sketches and any personal recollections of tour '82 (and to thank everyone who already has). For now, it's back to the old drawing board and this month's letters column;

Hello!

My first encounter with CEREBUS was issue 2, which I picked off the rack, browsed through, and put back in place, thinking: "Ah! Howard the Duck meets Smith's Conan!"

All right. So it appears this was a mistake.

In the ensuing months, fandom started getting praisefully vocal about CEREBUS. But then, fandom has hailed master swipers from Esteban Maroto to Brunner and Sienkiewicz as creators in their own right, so what does fandom really know? A friend lent me issues 15 and 16, and I was hooked. Not only was this **good**, but the art was terrific and original, and there was Groucho Marx. I could not find an outlet that sold the mag before issue 24 (So what do you think? That CEREBUS is sold in France?) but from then on, I've been a regular. I could go on with the praise, but what can one really say? The mag is great fun and I love it. I'll give a special mention to the covers since issue 39: the color schemes have been outstanding, and the results far more satisfying that the run of recent paintings.

This, I know, is a very dull letter. It seems that letters of praise are invariably dull. I just wanted to acknowledge the fun I have, every month or so, with your magazine, the more so since the reintroduction of a smattering of slapstick humor.

So, come on, carry on with CEREBUS. I'll be watching.

Sincerely yours,

Patrick Marcel
8/17 Residence des Pres Lenclos
62780 CUCQ FRANCE

Thank you for a very nice letter. Your stamp looks great in Deni's collection, by the way.

Dear David,

It is not often one must begin a fan letter with a mini-auto-biography, but it is necessary in order to put my comments in the proper frame of reference. I have been both an amateur and professional political worker on and off since 1968. I began, as a student, working for Senator Robert Kennedy, and after his tragic death, for Hubert Humphrey. Then, since Edward Kennedy did not run in 1976, like other Kennedy men, I worked in Jimmy Carter's primary compaign, and in the fall presidential election, this time as professional staff member. And in 1980 I was involved with the (sadly) unsuccessful primary campaign of Sen. Edward Kennedy. (Guess what I'll be doing in 1984!) The point is, I know politics, inside and out.

Which brings us to your current story line in Cerebus. It is wildly funny, of course, and the art is up to the Sim excellent standards, but over and above those remarks, this campaign is tragically and hilariously true to life . . . accurate, that is. I am tempted to believe you have yourself been involved in the political arena. Sad, if true, since that means you Canadians are as screwed up as we Yanks. No, you are not, cause Trudeau runs circles 'round our . . gag . . . nixon and reagan. After all, Trudeau was conferring with John Lennon on world peace at the same time Nixon was trying to deport him. But I digress. I was saying . . . accurate, that is. If you are not or never have been in politics, you are one of the most perceptive and astute observers of that profession ever. Not a surprise, since your writing (and art) has always been marked by your uncanny ability to capture the essence of a character or situation, whether straight or satirical. The political journalism profession lost a fine reporter when you decided to do comics. Thank goodness! Reporters are a dime a dozen, but good comics are like rare, well, apricot brandy.

I only came to Cerebus this summer. Due to constant urging from Cat Yronwode and your fellow Ontario dweller, Elizabeth Holden, both friends by mail, I tried this "best comic on the market". Sho' nuff, dey wuz keerect. I managed to get the first 16 issues through your reprints (and bless the considerate Deni and Dave for thus allowing new fans economically feasable access to early issues), and every other issue from 17 to the latest, here, #43. And I have never enjoyed a run of comics more. I have continued to spead the word, converting 5 new fans at our combination non-club for comics and barbarian savage group, called "Sparkie's Marauders." And yes, we are as sick as we sound. The fact is, and I do not give fatuous praise, that all one needs to do to convert a comic fan to a Cerebus fan is convince him/her ??? to read one or two issues. The quality does the rest.

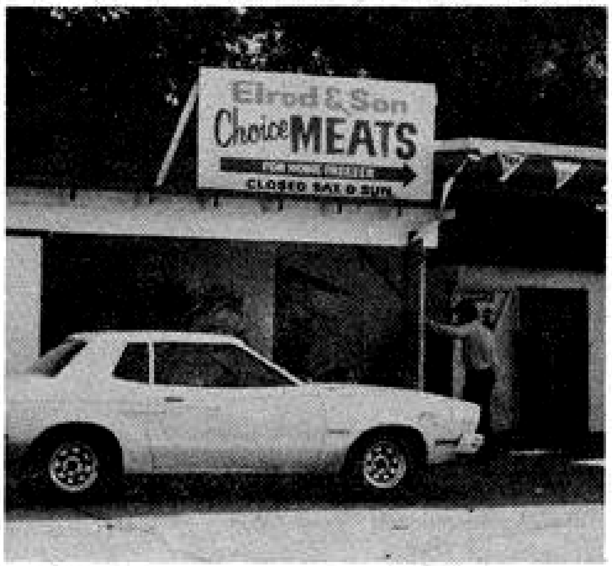
Let me close by thanking Dave and Deni for one of the most entertaining summers of back issue reading I have had the pleasure to experience. Dave, you are almost as much a smart-ass as I (private joke for Liz, my pal), and we share much in a sense of humour, and world-view. Ya done good, kid.

Because I have developed so much admiration for your talent, and so much appreciation for your giving me so much enjoyment, I feel I may close:

With Love,

Steven Zanvil Sawolkin
8810 Comanche Court
Olivette, MO 63132

As a long-time Kennedy follower and political groupie (of sorts), I was very pleased to hear that you found Cerebus reasonably accurate politically. Best of luck in '84. (This was written before you know-who announced you know-what).



So you thought, I say, so you thought only Elfquest could run cute tie-in photos of their character's names? Elrod & Son was submitted by Bill Mosher of Chino, California that is. Choice meats including Albino, I say, Albino cutlets, son.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni,

I was greatly surprised that I enjoyed Cerebus #42. Not that I don't like the book, it's just that since it turned so political I haven't enjoyed it as much. I'm not political in any way and all this double and triple talk gets my head to spinning. Aside from all this, I did enjoy #42. I am ashamed to say that I didn't expect it to be as good as it was, but that goes to show you how narrow-minded even a long time reader like myself can be.

What changed my opinion of the book was the Rodney Dangerfield character. He was the reason that prompted this letter. He made an otherwise political situation bearable (along with the Regancy elf). Well, I just thought that you'd be interested in this reader's opinion and I must say that I'm quite glad that all this political broohahaha is soon gonna be over.

P.S. How about a short story where "Sir Rodney" meets Lord Julius? Thanks for listening.

Harold Karey
Jersey City, N.J.

I admit that it was a little unfair to squeeze you en between Steven and Bob, Harold. Maybe you can take heart from my answer to Bob's letter, though.

Dear Dave and Deni,

Well, yes, I did read CEREBUS when it first came out, but didn't stick with it; barbarian satire, as a genre, just didn't much appeal to me. At least, not until a few years later, when, by some caprice of fate, my first published story turned out to be a barbarian satire (in EPIC ILLUSTRATED #11). I began to warm to thud and blunder . . .

And when visiting the EPIC offices just last month, I was shown a hilarious "Little Nemo" barbarian satire Dave had done for the book, and, with Dave's name pulled back to the forefront of my consciousness, I decided to give CEREBUS a second look. So I went out and bought the last fifteen issues.

And, migod, it's not barbarian satire anymore. It's . . . . . I don't want to say ths, people will think I'm a praise ninny . . . . . but it's **literature.** In twenty-odd years of reading comics, I've never come across anything to compare with this -- the first real graphic comedy of manners and power. Sort of like Moliere crossed with Jane Austen crossed with Hunter Thomson -- but then again,, not really . . . . . WHAT HAPPENED? And why have I been missing out? I just **hate** missing these small-scale cultural revolutions, **especially** when I've been around for the opening act. Consider me repentent -- consider me born again. Consider me at your service. Do you need your venetian blinds cleaned?

Really -- I look back at the "Howard the Duck for President" issues Steve Gerber did and they look so obvious and graceless. The "High Society" sequence in Cerebus simply goes beyond anything ever attempted in comics before, in scope, in tone, in the sheer complexity of the narrative; no, literature **isn't** too strong a word. Not these days; not when the graphic medium is gradually becoming a creator's medium; not when something like "High Society" is possible. As for the art -- it reminds me of a Fred Astaire dance routine. There goes Fred all over the soundstage, like he weighs four ounces, doing all sorts of terpsicorean tricks and treats, looking for all the world as though it were spontaneous and effortless. Ditto Dave's work on CEREBUS --so full of brilliant, superbly-executed storytelling devices on every page, that it all begins to look like the natural order; and it's only when you get back to a regular book from the House of Ideas or its Distinctive Competition that you realize how every page of CEREBUS is head-and-shoulders above its plodding commercial sisters. The design sense in CEREBUS is so strong that reading each issue is pretty equally an aesthetic and an intellectual adventure.

Oh, yeah -- the covers are especially fine. You seem to go through phases with these -- when you become fond of a particular device or look, and each cover reflects this until you become fond of a new one; it keeps the covers very fresh, and very exciting.

Can the Regency Elf have her own back-up series? Huh? Please? And are Cerebus dolls still available? At any price? (It's not for **me**, of course, it's for my -- uh, my little **nephew** . . .).

Anyway -- in order to bring this letter to a thematically satisfying close, let me just add how grateful I am that you **won't** be returning to Hyborean humor with CEREBUS. Leave that to those of us who are new at the game. You've found something much more enduring, much more resonant.

Bob Rodi
2811 N. Pine Grove Ave.
#2B
Chicago, Ill. 60614

The Cerebus dolls are still available for $15.00 from Sheila Watson, Apt. 6 - 549 Victoria Street South, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2M 3A8. If I gave each of the supporting characters a back-up series when demand was great enough, there'd be no room left for Cerebus!

Sorry, Elf-fans.

I never said I wasn't returning to Hyborean humour -- I just don't want to make it a steady diet -- and I certainly don't intend to stop High Society early in order to get back to it. I hope that clears up some of the confusion about future directions of Cerebus.

Dear Dave and Deni,

Here I shell out a buck and a half of my hard-earned money for my comic, and what do I find? Some "earth-pig" named Cerebus has taken over! There're only a few obligatory panels with me in 'em. This is an outrage! This is an afront to my mentality, an afront to my sanity, an' a front to my back! Why, I'm so mad, I'm turning

CEREBUS ORIGINAL ART

That's right, I'm still selling Cerebus original artwork. $100 per page. Issues 30 through 35 are pretty well picked over, but everyone's taste is different it seems; there have been very few multiple orders for single pages (the possible exception being the "wee-wees in the sink" page which I could have sold six times over). Everyone who has included alternate selections has ended up with nothing lower than the second choice on their list. Certified cheques or money orders. Payable to Aardvark Vanaheim. Makes the ideal Christmas gift. Orders shipped within a week (now that Deni has help in the office). I reserve the right to reject discounts for quantity orders, but I also reserve the right to let my greed get the better of me. Make me an offer.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

orange, and then what'll you have? An orange Julius! Well, I for one won't stand for it!

Take the two party system of Palnu, known colloquially as the "us versus them" system. This is a new system that, in all dishonesty, does not work. Why, a one party system was good enough for your grandfather, but who wants to be seen with him nowadays? No one, not even his pet avocado. Ah yes, I remember the one party system. That was some party! I didn't get home until around four in the morning. I was blind for three days. Not like the party today. Hah! You call this a party? Some party. There's nothing, not even ice cream. To top all of this off, you aren't even aware of the issues! Take the alligator pears. Take all the alligator pears and keep 'em! See if I care! Have you any idea how alligator pears are made? No? Well, that's because you've never been an alligator, and don't let it happen again.

Oh, Deni, Deni, can't you see what I am trying to say! I love you! I love everything about you! Your eyes. Your money. Your nose. Your money. Your lips. Your money. You have got money, haven't you? Because if not, I can quit right here, I might still love you, but I'd keep my trap shut about it. But, you are asking, what are my qualifications as a candidate. Well, medically, my experiences have been pretty dull, except during the Flu epidemic of '81. That's when I caught the Flu.

It's no use, Deni. I can't forget you. Your eyes, your nose, your mouth! Everything about you reminds me of you. Except you. Now, how do you explain that? Oh, Dave and Deni. How happy I could be with either one of you, if only you both went away!

Know now -- er -- Now know -- No, that doesn't sound right -- Uh -- Understand -- Ah hah!! -- that this entire situation in Planu has me slightly incensed, so I have therefore sent a copy of this letter; dictated to my trusted secretary, Horatio W. Jamison; to my lawyer; J. Cheever Loophole; part of the firm of Hungerdunger, Hungerdunger, and McCormack (you fool, Jamison. You left out a Hungerdunger. You left out the main one, too. Oh, well, they won't all be there when the letter arrives, anyway). If this tie situation is not cleared up (I was a tie fighter in STAR WARS), and soon, they will send you legal notice by way of their sometime-messenger, Captain Jeffery J. Spaulding. He only acts as their sometime messenger, because there is only safari would go.

I leave you now with this admonition; vote right in the Palnu elections, or, like ol' D. and D. here, you might wind up getting Lord Julius' goat.

Lord Julius,
Palnu

Dear Dave and Deni,

I am terribly sorry for the above. One of my patients wanted to tell you how much he enjoyed the latest issue of **Cerebus**, number 43. As you can see, he has a slight identity problem. He thinks he's Napoleon.

A recent convert to *Cerebus* myself, due to your use of the Grouchonian Lord Julius, all I can say is, keep up the great work. I will keep buying **Cerebus** long after Julius departs from these pages (hopefully into his own mag.).

Ray Rose
1503 Ladd St.
Silver Springs, Maryland 20902

Ray cops the 1982 "I tried to make Dave and Deni laugh and succeeded" award. Two points for the man from Silver Spring -- you brightened our evening when we got back from the tour, Ray.

Dear Dave and Deni

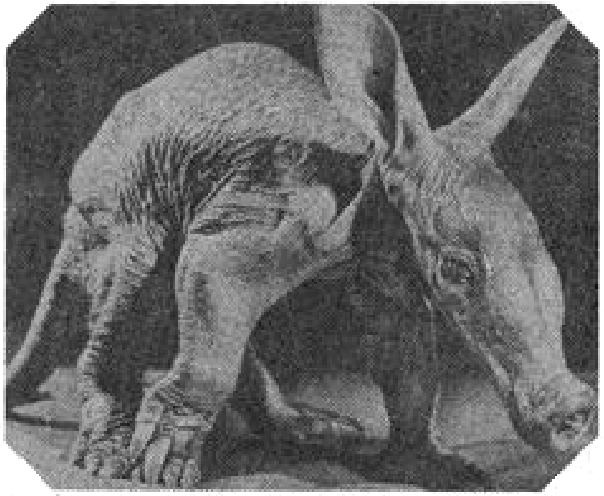
Just a quick note to tell you how much I've been enjoying "Cerebus" lately. It seemed to fall into a slump around issue 27, continuing through to issue 32, but it's really picked up over the past 6 months. As far as I'm concerned NOBODY is currently producing a more successful blending of art and words than you Dave, at least not on such a consistent level. My only regret is that the stories are so short, though I'd rather have it that way then having you substituting quantity for quality.

Before I sign off, I've got a question I'd like to ask. Will you be reprinting the back up stories from "Swords" in a separate book? I've got a near complete collection of "Cerebus" and therefore have not purchased "Swords" from issue 2 onwards (I simply cannot afford to pay over $3.00 for an 8 page story, new covers and an introduction). I'm sure there must be other people in a similar situation, people who've been with you since the beginning only to find that their collection of Cerebus stories is incomplete due to the new stories in "Swords".

I realize that you think the fan is getting more for his money because of the back-up stories in "Swords", but to me it seems that the fan who buys "Swords" for the reprints will be well satisfied by these alone, whereas the fan who can't afford to buy them merely for an 8 page story is the one who won't be satisfied. In adopting this format for Swords, you give the "new" fan more than he expects and leave the "old" fans feeling either frustrated or cheated.

Adrian Shelley
40E Hyland Close, Hornchurch
Essex, England

Yes, we will be reprinting all of those stories in one book, but we don't have it scheduled.



An actual photo of a real true-to-life aardvark, given to us very early in the tour by a fan whose name we have forgotten (it was a loong tour, folks). Anyone else having photos of real aardvarks, or information about them beyond the standard "eats ants, lives on the African plains, lethal claws" variety are invited to send said items to That is One Ugly Quadruped, c/o Aardvark Comment, Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 4R2 (R2 D2's grandfather according to one wag who wrote us).

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Dear Comic Fan,

This letter is to announce the 2nd Annual Comic Fan Awards, the 1982 Koppy Awards. These awards are not sponsored by or affiliated with any professional publishing company or fanzine. In order to assure the largest possible participation, no fees will be charged for voting. These are the rules:

1. Eligible Voters: any comic fan
2. Eligible for Awards:
   a. Any comic story or cover published in a book or periodical dated 1982.
   b. Any comics-related dramatic presentation show in 1982.
   c. Any person associated with the creation of comics.
3. Awards Given:
   a. Best Comic Short Story (1-12 pgs.) - Writing (Plot & Script)
   b. Best Comic Short Story (1-12 pgs.) - Art (Pencils & Ink)
   c. Best Comic Short Story (1-12 pgs.) - Coloring
   d. Best Comic Novelette (13-25 pgs.) - Writing
   e. Best Comic Novelette (13-25 pgs.) - Art
   f. Best Comic Novelette (13-25 pgs.) - Coloring
   g. Best Comic Novella (26-60 pgs.) - Writing
   h. Best Comic Novella (26-60 pgs.) - Art
   i. Best Comic Novella (26-60 pgs.) - Coloring
   j. Best Comic Novel (61 pgs. or more) - Writing
   k. Best Comic Novel (61 pgs. or more) - Art
   l. Best Comic Novel (61 pgs. or more) - Coloring
   m. Best Cover Drawing
   n. Best Cover Painting
   o. Best Dramatic Presentation
   p. Hall of Fame Award for Outstanding Career Achievement
4. Vote for 5 choices or fewer in each category, in order of preference. If you feel no award should be given in a category, vote "No Award". If you feel unqualified to vote in a category, vote "Don't Know".
5. To vote for a category, give the name of the story, along with the title of the book or issue number.
6. For best cover, give the book title or issue number. For best dramatic presentation (e.g. movies, TV, etc.) give the name of the drama.
7. For continued stories (e.g. in the "Best Novel" category), give the story title and book title or issue number of only the first and last parts. Continued stories are eligible if any part is in a publication dated 1982.
8. For a copy of the results, send a SASE plus 30¢ with your ballot.
9. Balloting closes February 28, 1983.
10. Results will also be sent to the publishers of:
    DC Comics, Marvel Comics, Whitman Comics, Archie Comics, Harvey Comics, Charlton Comics, Warren Comics, Heavy Metal, Kitchen Sink Comics, Cerebus the Aardvark, Elfquest, Pacific Comics, First Kingdom, New Media/Irjax Comics, Eclipse Comics, Fantaco Comics, Capital Comics, Rip Off Press publications, Comics Journal, The Comic Reader, Comics Scene, Prevue, RBCC, The Buyer's Guide, Media Showcase, and other interested publications.
11. Send your ballot to: David Craven
    1836 Glenwood Ave.
    Independence, MO 64052

The Official
CEREBUS TOY

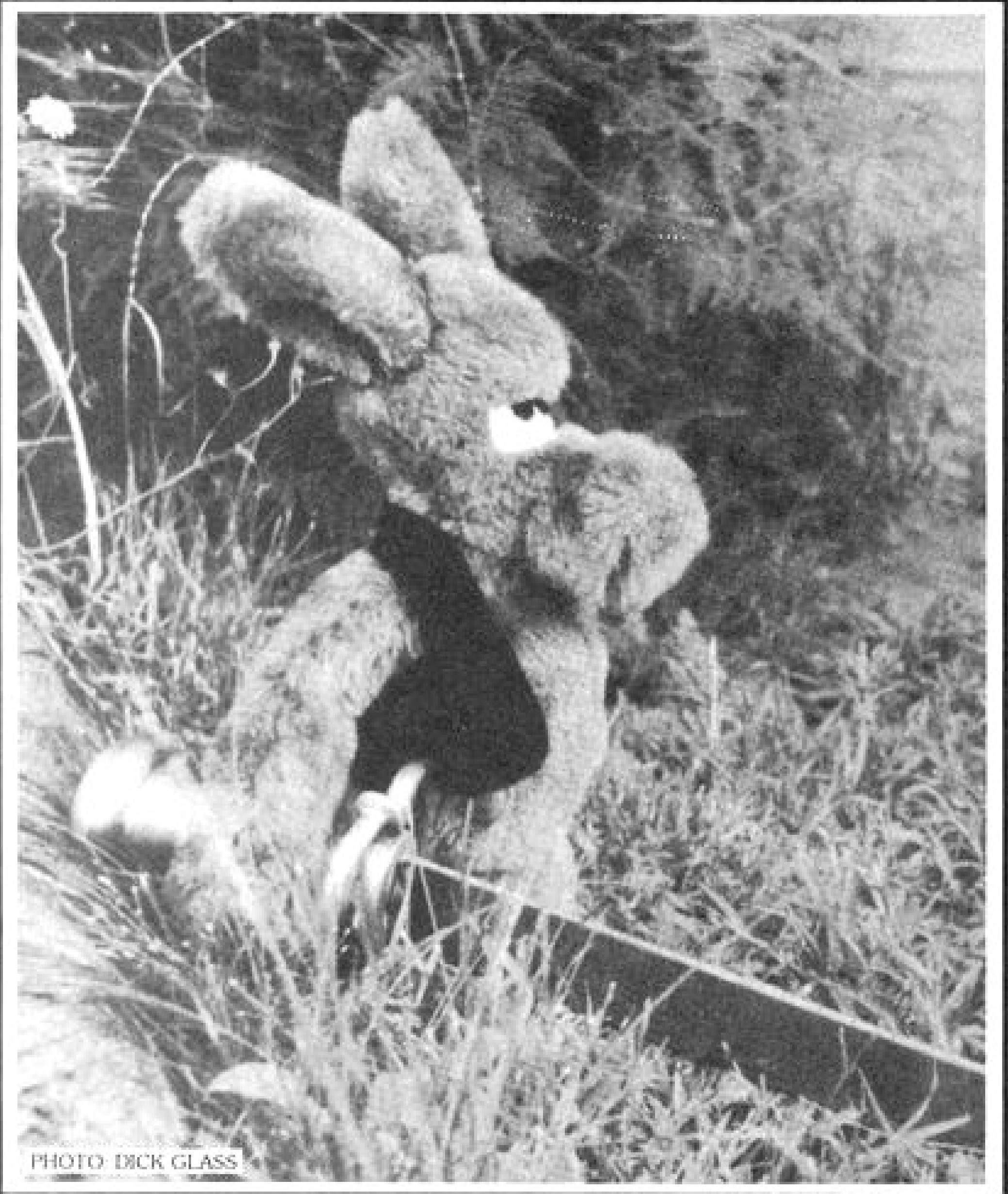
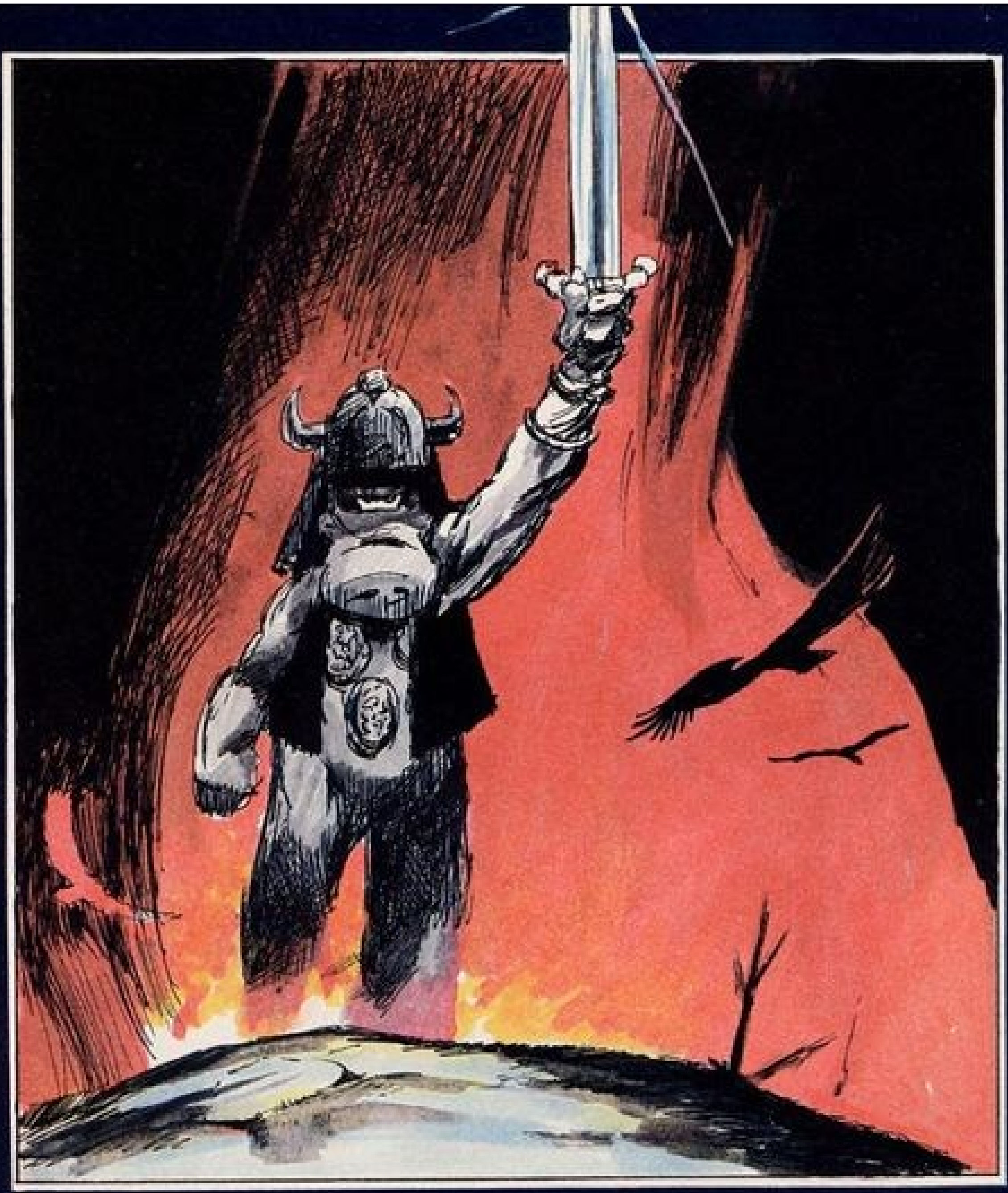


PHOTO: DICK GLASS

To get your toy
send $15.00 to the address below
(certified cheque or money order only please)

Sheila M. Watson
Apt. 6-549 Victoria St. S.
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2M 3A8



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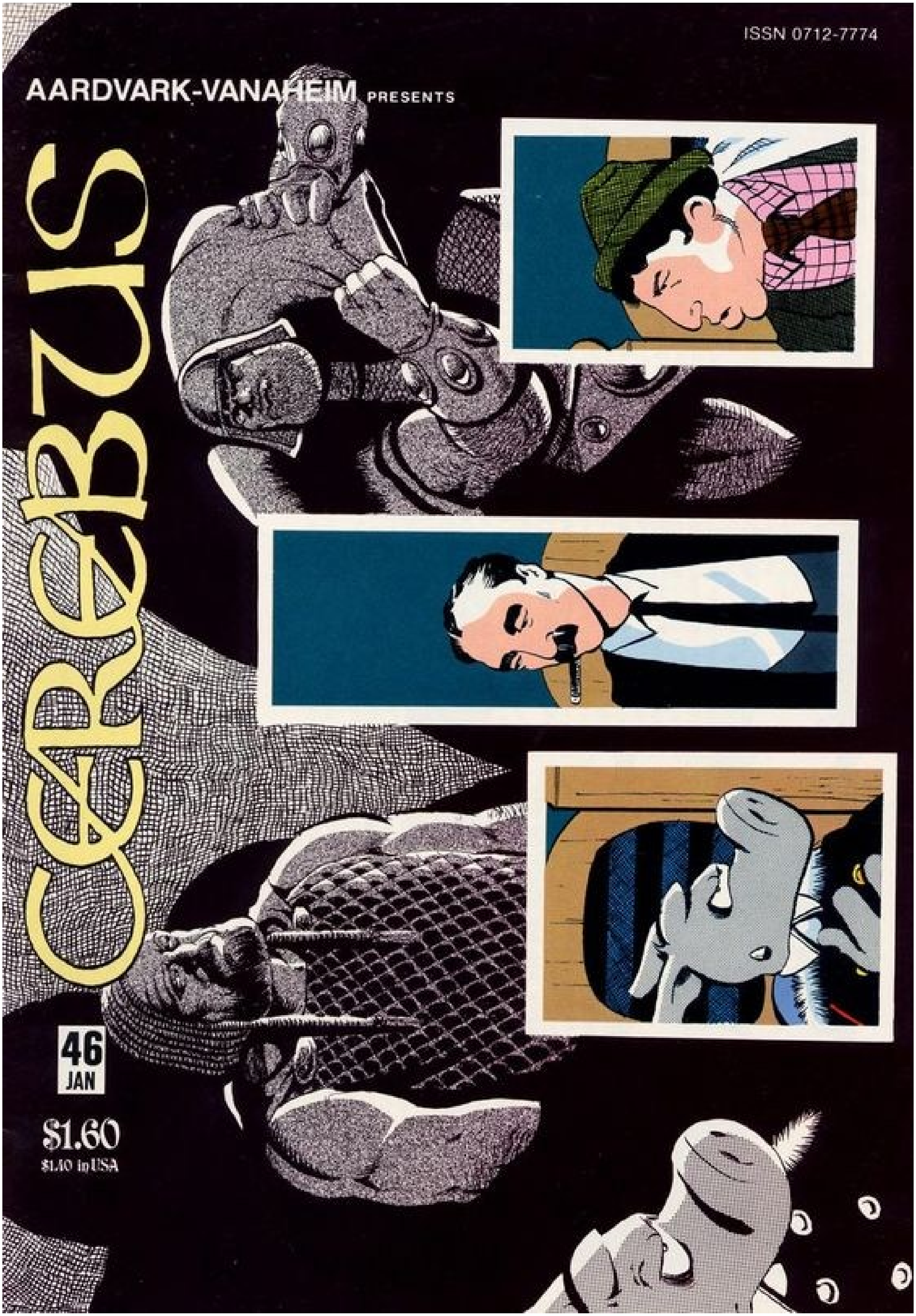

46
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A Note from the Publisher

6&5

This issue you will notice there is a change to our cover. The price of Cerebus has finally had to be split, and I am sure there are some people who are wondering why. To be honest, the idea of a different price for Cerebus in Canada than in the U.S. had never occurred to me. Not that I wasn't aware of the exchange rate between the U.S. and Canada dollars. I had just never considered it from the American point of view. Obviously, the Canadian distributors were getting Cerebus at a better price - but I thought of it as a "be proud of Canada - help Canadian business" kind of attitude. Of course, this only works if Canadian distributors **only** sell in Canada and vice-versa. But distributors are not regional in comics. The problems caused by this was brought to my attention by some of our distributors just before we left on tour. However, if we charged the U.S. distributors in Canadian funds (one solution) it would mean a substantial enough loss of revenue to endanger our continuing. The only logical solution was to have a split price on Cerebus, one for the U.S. and one for Canada. The problem with this was that our Prime Minister has announced a program of restraint, with voluntary wage and price guidelines being the major factor. The program is called "the six and five solution", with wages and prices only being allowed to increase by six percent this year and by five percent next year. Being the only on-going comic-book publisher in Canada carries with it some responsibilities. The logical solution was to increase the price in Canada by 6 percent (up 9¢, so we did cheat a bit on that) and to bring the price **down** in the U.S. to give us the 20¢ margin between prices that we were looking for. If I could have lowered it another 5¢, I would have, but 5¢ per copy is a lot of money to be losing each month. Dave and I hope that our readers will understand this solution and bear with it.

Our story in Unique this month is the first installment of a two-part story by Toronto artist Michael Cherkas. Michael's main character is Dick Mallet, whom Michael describes as "a cartoon-like character in a real world of bleak stories concerning the underside of life." I liked the mood of the stories when they were submitted to me a long while back for **Out of the Depths**. When I had to cancel that project, I kept the sample Michael sent me in the hopes that I could publish them in the future. It just goes to show, that what they say is true - good stories never get tossed, just refiled for future use.

I hope you will enjoy this issue of Cerebus and his new-found buddy as much as I did. See you next month.

Deni

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published fifteen times a year by Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc., P.O. Box 1674, Station 'C', Kitchener, Ontario Canada N2G 4R2, including three "Swords of Cerebus" in winter, spring and fall. All contents © 1983 Dave Sim. Any inquiries regarding use of the characters, images, or situations depicted should be addressed to Deni Sim. No unauthorized reproduction allowed except for review or other Journalistic purpose. Advertising rates furnished on request. Printed in Canada by Preney Print and Litho Inc., Windsor, Ontario.

CEREBUS

VOL 1 NO 46 JANUARY 1983

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Assistant to the Publisher
Karen McKiel

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Bud Plant Inc
P.O. Box 1886
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Pacific Comics
P.O. Box 99217
San Diego, CA 92109

Glenwood Distribution
124 Vandalia St
Collinsville, IL 62234

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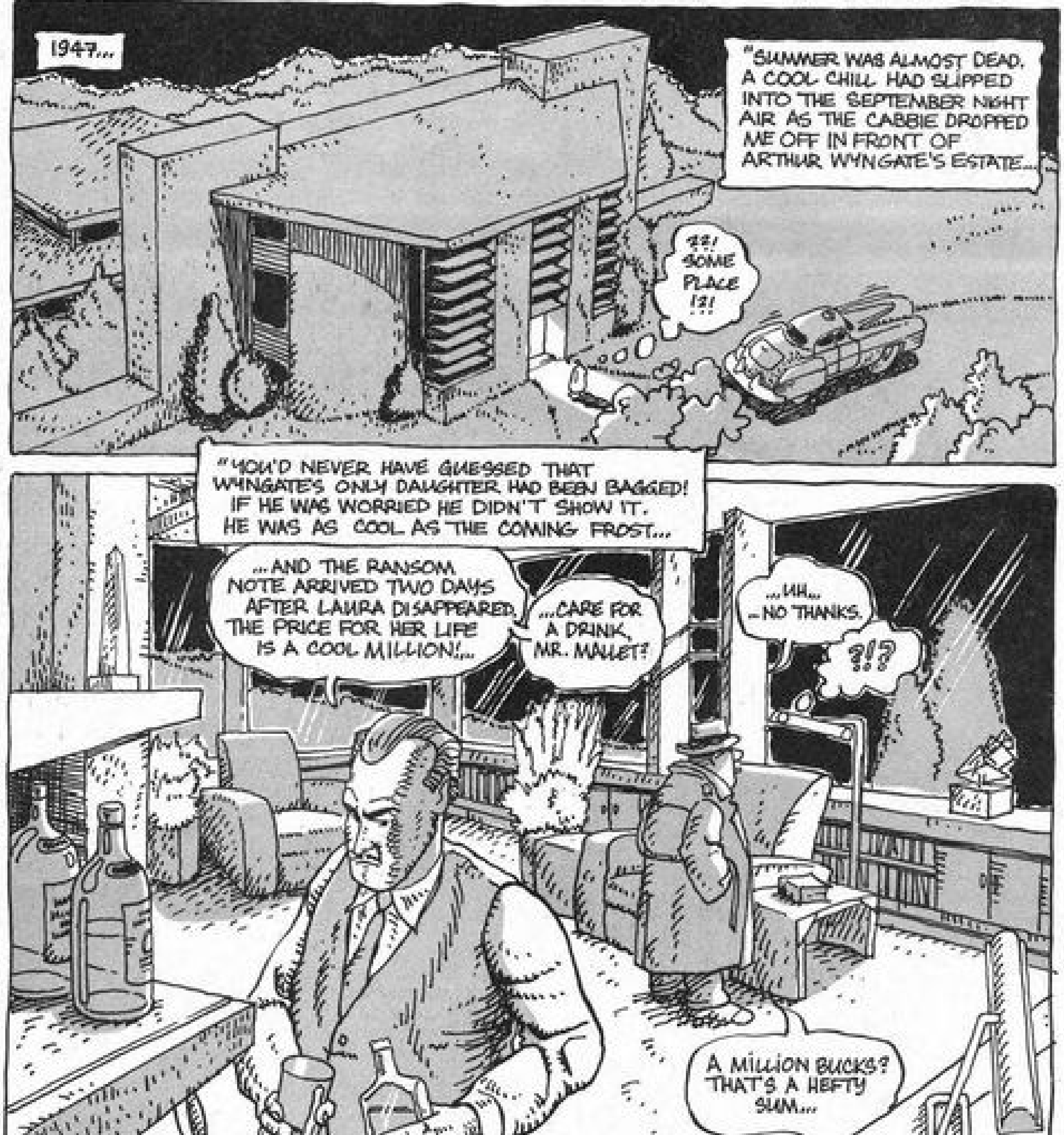
These issues are available wholesale & single copies from the above distributors:

Swords of Cerebus, Volumes 1, 3, & 4 Cerebus #'s 32, 33, 37, 38, 40, & 43

A UNIQUE STORY

A DICK MALLET TALE

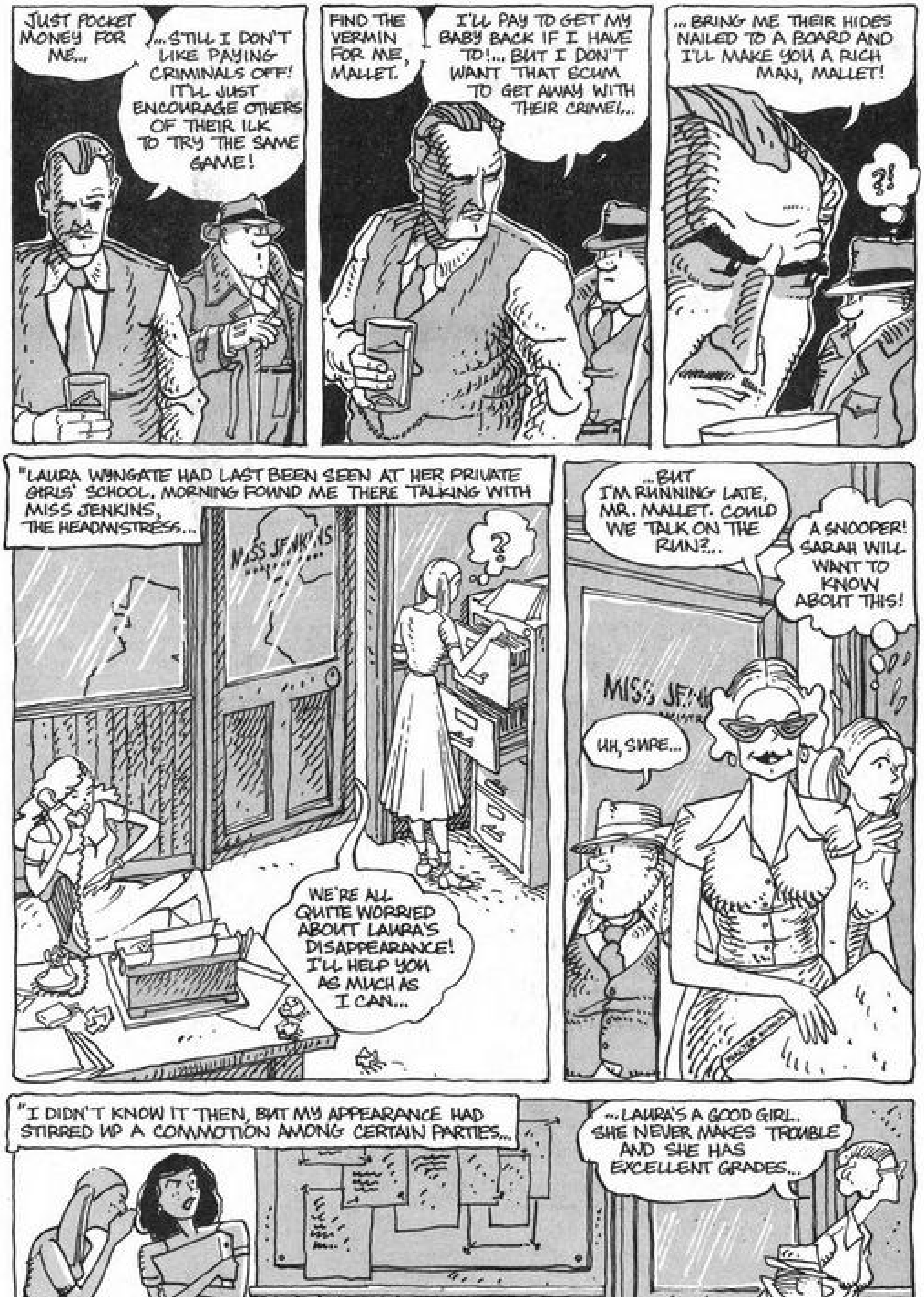

1947...
"SUMMER WAS ALMOST DEAD. A COOL CHILL HAD SLIPPED INTO THE SEPTEMBER NIGHT AIR AS THE CABBIE DROPPED ME OFF IN FRONT OF ARTHUR WYNGATE'S ESTATE...
?!? SOME PLACE !?!
"YOU'D NEVER HAVE GUESSED THAT WYNGATE'S ONLY DAUGHTER HAD BEEN BAGGED! IF HE WAS WORRIED HE DIDN'T SHOW IT. HE WAS AS COOL AS THE COMING FROST...
...AND THE RANSOM NOTE ARRIVED TWO DAYS AFTER LAURA DISAPPEARED. THE PRICE FOR HER LIFE IS A COOL MILLION!...
...CARE FOR A DRINK, MR. MALLET?
...UH... ...NO THANKS.
?!?
A MILLION BUCKS? THAT'S A HEFTY SUM...
1.

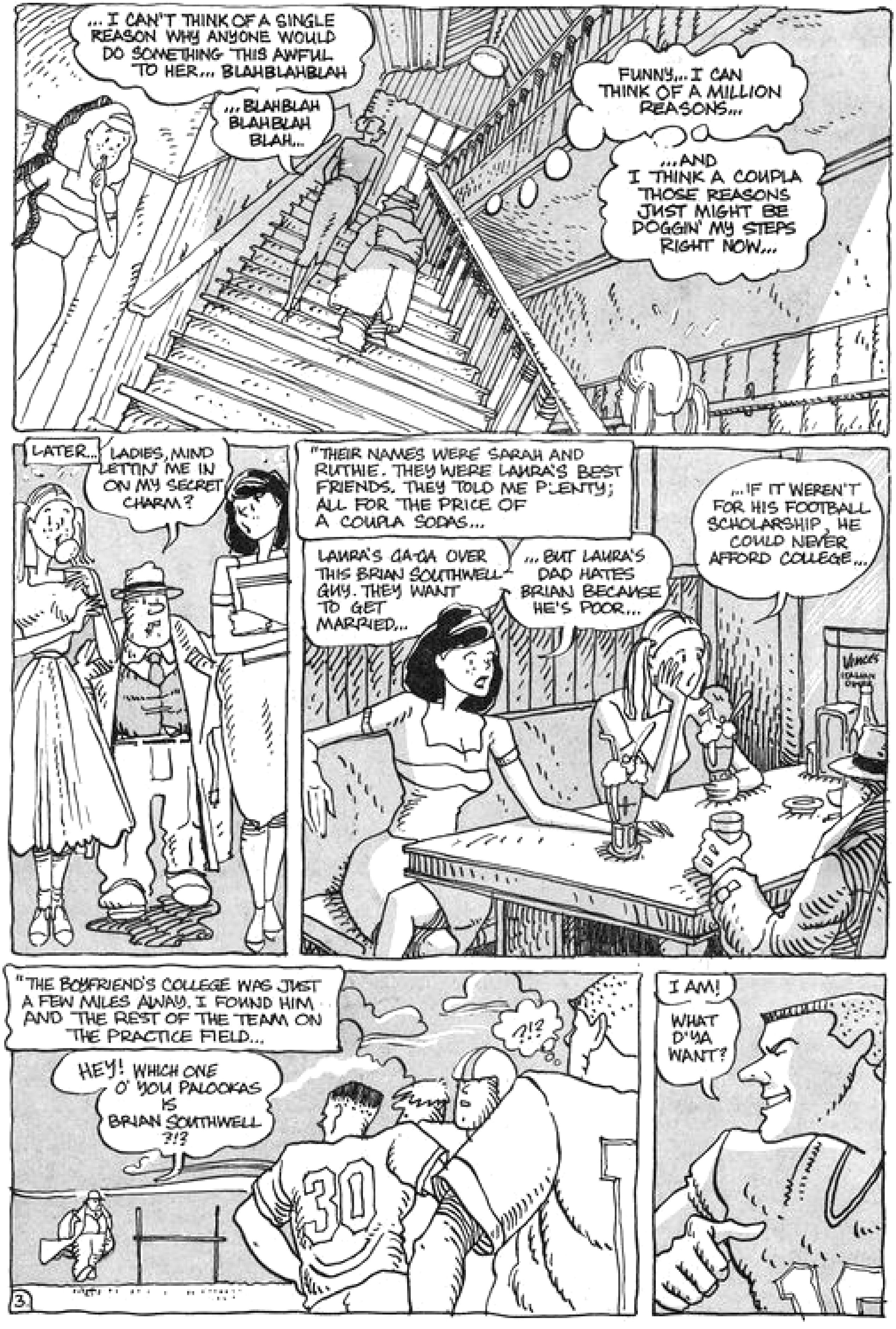
THE MISSING SCHOOLGIRL

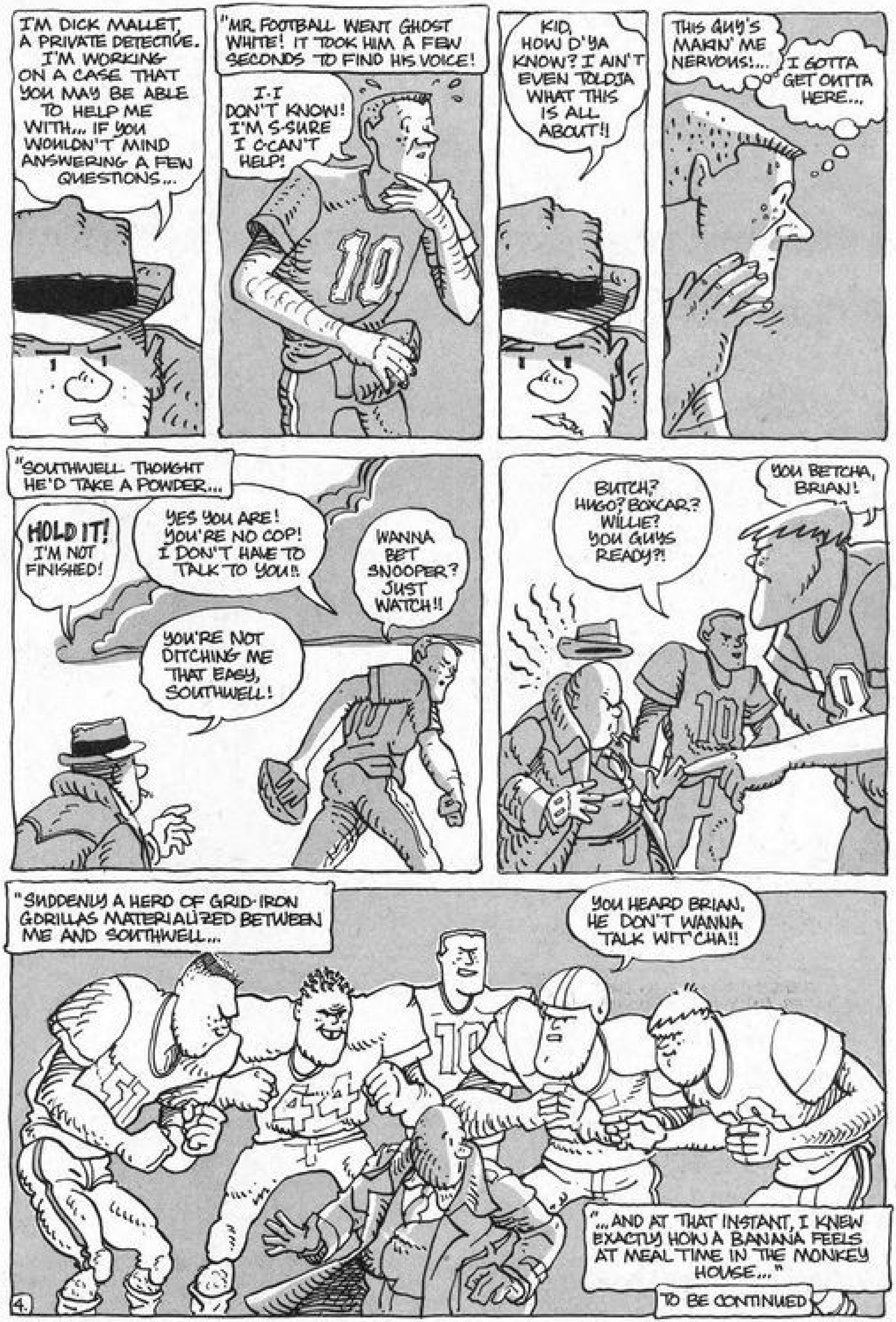
PART ONE

Story by JOHN E. SECH; Artwork by MICHAEL CHERKAS

'DICK MALLET' IS COPYRIGHT © 1982 by JOHN ELLIS SECH & MICHAEL CHERKAS.


JUST POCKET MONEY FOR ME...
...STILL I DON'T LIKE PAYING CRIMINALS OFF! IT'LL JUST ENCOURAGE OTHERS OF THEIR ILK TO TRY THE SAME GAME!
FIND THE VERMIN FOR ME, MALLET.
I'LL PAY TO GET MY BABY BACK IF I HAVE TO!... BUT I DON'T WANT THAT SCUM TO GET AWAY WITH THEIR CRIME!...
... BRING ME THEIR HIDES NAILED TO A BOARD AND I'LL MAKE YOU A RICH MAN, MALLET!
?!
"LAURA WYNGATE HAD LAST BEEN SEEN AT HER PRIVATE GIRLS' SCHOOL. MORNING FOUND ME THERE TALKING WITH MISS JENKINS, THE HEADMISTRESS...
MISS JENKINS
?
WE'RE ALL QUITE WORRIED ABOUT LAURA'S DISAPPEARANCE! I'LL HELP YOU AS MUCH AS I CAN...
...BUT I'M RUNNING LATE, MR. MALLET. COULD WE TALK ON THE RUN?...
A SNOOPER! SARAH WILL WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS!
MISS JENK
UH, SURE...
"I DIDN'T KNOW IT THEN, BUT MY APPEARANCE HAD STIRRED UP A COMMOTION AMONG CERTAIN PARTIES...
...LAURA'S A GOOD GIRL. SHE NEVER MAKES TROUBLE AND SHE HAS EXCELLENT GRADES...


... I CAN'T THINK OF A SINGLE REASON WHY ANYONE WOULD DO SOMETHING THIS AWFUL TO HER... BLAHBLAHBLAH
...BLAHBLAH BLAHBLAH BLAH...
FUNNY... I CAN THINK OF A MILLION REASONS...
...AND I THINK A COUPLA THOSE REASONS JUST MIGHT BE DOGGIN' MY STEPS RIGHT NOW...
LATER...
LADIES, MIND LETTIN' ME IN ON MY SECRET CHARM?
"THEIR NAMES WERE SARAH AND RUTHIE. THEY WERE LAURA'S BEST FRIENDS. THEY TOLD ME PLENTY; ALL FOR THE PRICE OF A COUPLA SODAS...
LAURA'S GA-GA OVER THIS BRIAN SOUTHWELL GUY. THEY WANT TO GET MARRIED...
...BUT LAURA'S DAD HATES BRIAN BECAUSE HE'S POOR...
...IF IT WEREN'T FOR HIS FOOTBALL SCHOLARSHIP, HE COULD NEVER AFFORD COLLEGE...
VINCE'S
"THE BOYFRIEND'S COLLEGE WAS JUST A FEW MILES AWAY. I FOUND HIM AND THE REST OF THE TEAM ON THE PRACTICE FIELD...
HEY! WHICH ONE O' YOU PALOOKAS IS BRIAN SOUTHWELL ?!?
?!?
30
I AM!
WHAT D'YA WANT?


I'M DICK MALLET, A PRIVATE DETECTIVE. I'M WORKING ON A CASE THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO HELP ME WITH... IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND ANSWERING A FEW QUESTIONS...
"MR. FOOTBALL WENT GHOST WHITE! IT TOOK HIM A FEW SECONDS TO FIND HIS VOICE!
I-I DON'T KNOW! I'M S-SURE I C-CAN'T HELP!
10
KID, HOW D'YA KNOW? I AIN'T EVEN TOLDJA WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!!
THIS GUY'S MAKIN' ME NERVOUS!...
I GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE...
"SOUTHWELL THOUGHT HE'D TAKE A POWDER...
HOLD IT! I'M NOT FINISHED!
YES YOU ARE! YOU'RE NO COP! I DON'T HAVE TO TALK TO YOU!!
WANNA BET SNOOPER? JUST WATCH!!
YOU'RE NOT DITCHING ME THAT EASY, SOUTHWELL!
BUTCH? HUGO? BOXCAR? WILLIE? YOU GUYS READY?!
YOU BETCHA, BRIAN!
10
"SUDDENLY A HERD OF GRID-IRON GORILLAS MATERIALIZED BETWEEN ME AND SOUTHWELL...
YOU HEARD BRIAN. HE DON'T WANNA TALK WIT'CHA!!
57
44
10
"...AND AT THAT INSTANT, I KNEW EXACTLY HOW A BANANA FEELS AT MEAL TIME IN THE MONKEY HOUSE..."
TO BE CONTINUED

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni:

I only just finished **Cerebus** #44, and wanted to say it was the best issue in a while. Now that the election is over, hopefully the pace is going to pick up. Things were getting awful slow there for a while. #44 was snappy and well-paced, and printing it sidewise was a little strange as well. Alternating Astoria-and Cootie's drinkingfest with Cerebus' "whuffing" worked quite well, I thought. The art this time around was extremely well done. The last few issues looked rushed to me. There hasn't been nearly as effective use of shadows as I have come to expect. I assume this is due to the Great American Tour. I await your return.

"Neil the Horse" is great. I enjoyed seeing him & crew again this issue. Will there be a mini-series? I'm totally fascinated with this strip, and I hope we see a lot more of it.

On a more personal note, I was saddened to hear of Gene Day's passing. I only met him twice, but found him to be an extremely vibrant and alive person. It's hard to lose a close friend, especially one so unique and talented. My condolences to you and his family.

Yours truly,

Jon Marvin
1230 Radom St., Apt. #14
Pickering, Ontario
LIW 3B8

"Neil the Horse" begins as a bi-monthly title in February. To all those who wrote expressing condolences on Gene's passing, you will be happy to hear that Gale is managing to maintain the house they both worked so hard for and that his brother Dan has been offered work by DC Comics. Gale also intends to supervise publication of much of Gene's copyrighted work at a future date. She was very pleased to hear how many lives had been touched by Gene and how many people had expressed regret to Deni and I by mail and on the tour.

Dear Deni and Dave,

As the name at the top of the page probably doesn't mean anything to you, I am the kid who spent election night in California with you at your hotel in Beverly Hills (the one with the complicated pen that Dave couldn't figure out). I've been reading comics for some time now, yet I have never written any letter to any publication, until now, that is.

Last night I found myself in a serious dilemma. It was quite late at night and I would be getting up early that morning. I knew that I had a little bit of time to get some reading done before bed, though. I had just received my monthly comics and I knew that I had enough time to read just one. I started digging through for my Cerebus and found it right underneath the newest issue of X-Men. I took both comics out and stared at them. "Only time for one. But which one?" 5 minutes. "The X-Men are in a lot of trouble, but Cerebus might be the next prime minister". 10 minutes. "X-Men will give me a sort of science-fictional stimulation, but Cerebus is real funny". 15 minutes. I picked up the X-Men and started reading. A short while later I picked up Cerebus #44 andd started reading.

Chris Claremont isn't getting a letter.

I haven't laughed so hard at anything in a long time. Every sequence had something to break me up. Even doing the issue sideways (which probably meant having to turn your drawing table at a 90 degree angle) was kind of neat (although John Byrne got the same idea for Fantastic Four #252. Was this planned?)

Just one question: Why is Cerebus so concerned with being a prime minister when he could be a god? I would imagine that as a god he could get quite a bit of money (I'm not sure, I've never been one).

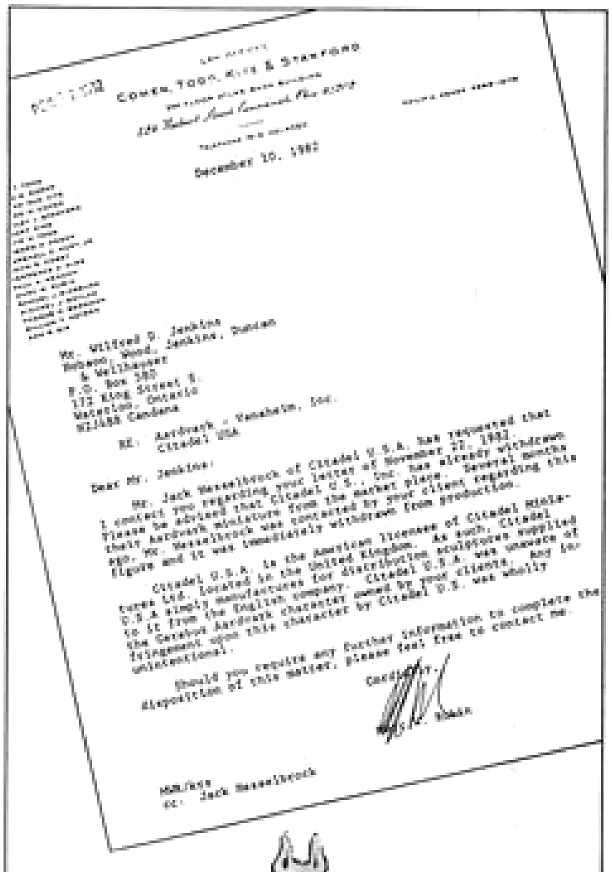
Well, keep up the good work, and please try to make it to the states more often, maybe you can even make it to San Diego next summer. Until then . . . . .

Keep fighting like Aardvarks

Jeff Rothstein
6524 Neddy Avenue
Canoga Park, CA., 91307

Just for the record, Jeff (and because I've gotten asked this a lot) I started drawing #44 the first week in September and it was finished when we left on the tour. I heard about Fantastic Four #252 when we were in Dallas (I read it actually in Lone Star Express). You'll have to ask John Byrne when he did his.

In answer to your question, he was offered money, power, luxuries and an army as Prime Minister. All he would get as a god was worshipful followers and an army. He was younger then, too.



December 10, 1982

Mr. Wilfred D. Jenkins
Hobson, Wood, Jenkins, Duncan
& Wellhauser
P.O. Box 580
172 King Street S.
Waterloo, Ontario
N2J4A8 Candana

RE: Aardvark - Vanaheim, Inc.
Citadel USA

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

Mr. Jack Hesselbrock of Citadel U.S.A. has requested that I contact you regarding your letter of November 22, 1982. Please be advised that Citadel U.S., Inc. has already withdrawn their Aardvark miniature from the market place. Several months ago, Mr. Hesselbrock was contacted by your client regarding this figure and it was immediately withdrawn from production.

Citadel U.S.A. is the American licensee of Citadel Miniatures Ltd. located in the United Kingdom. As such, Citadel U.S.A simply manufactures for distribution sculptures supplied to it from the English company. Citadel U.S.A. was unaware of the Cerebus Aardvark character owned by your clients. Any infringement upon this character by Citadel U.S. was wholly unintentional.

Should you require any further information to complete the disposition of this matter, please feel free to contact me.

Cordially,

MHR/kts
cc: Jack Hesselbrock

Watch for an authorized Cerebus miniature coming soon from Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni,

Boy, this suit is uncomfortable . . . Oh, uh, hi there. Gee, I'm kinda nervous, ya know? This is my first fan letter to CEREBUS, a series I really like, and I want to make a good impression. I may not have the communication skills of a John A. Wilcox, but I -- oh, cripes, my hair's sticking up. Let me get back to you.

Embarrassedly,

David Allen
Olney Central College
5 Douglas Drive
Olney, IL. 62450

Does anybody out there have a bottle of Vitalis they could loan David? Then he can try again next month.

Dear Dave and Deni,

Fantastic !! I haven't laughed so hard since I first heard the lumberjack song. I'm speaking, of course, of #44 - The Deciding Vote. Drunks are funny enough, but when you add that to a human bug who flies through personalities so fast, it makes Sybil look sane.

You have one of the funniest pieces of art I have ever read. Even funnier than any of Lord Julius' scenes. It took me half-an-hour to get past page 15, I laughed so hard.

Some questions: Were you trying to make sense on page 1 when the roach said "Freedom shall be safe from Democracy"? Normally the bug doesn't make sense, but that time he came dangerously close to making a political statement.

What **is** the Albatross for? I realize you probably won't tell me, but how soon will we find out?

Why did Cerebus have so much trouble in the snow, when in other issues he didn't seem to have much trouble?

How did you like California? I would've gone to meet you, except I was looking for another job at that time, and live too far away from where you were.

One last comment - I like the way Cerebus found out he won the election. Nothing comes easy for the little guy, does it?

Ed Fugate
258 Goodman
Bakersfield, CA.

1 - Yes I was.
2 - Didn't he though?
3 - Either Cerebus or the Western Pontiff.
4 - The issue you're holding in your hands.
5 - It was deep powder instead of hard-packed.
6 - California was great, we visited Deni's old neighbourhood in Los Altos.
7 - He's his own worst enemy.

Dear Dave & Deni:

This is a letter to tell you a) how much I appreciated your U.S. Tour (I was at the shop in Silver Spring Maryland and got a superb sketch of Cerebus in a furry black shirt) and b) that the letter printed in issue #44 from British fan Adrian Shelley made me mad.

First he complimented you for following your own best judgement, then he zapped straight into complaints about the direction you're taking. HOW DARE HE? Please keep doing what you feel is best with Cerebus. I am one fan who feels every issue has been better than the last. If Adrian Shelley feels any issue has been boring, I don't think he's been absorbing any of them as additions to a whole. "Boring" is **his** problem, sounds as if he wants flashy plots in which characters defeat armadas, cover incredible distances, and in the last four panels save the universe. He should subscribe to any one of the numerous super-herofests where that happens in every other issue; it's a relief and a delight that in Cerebus you show the grace and insight to focus on the significant, frustrating, convoluted, absurd small interactions of events and people that permeate any larger enterprise and end up being more real than the same situation depicted on a larger scale.

I enjoyed, for example, your use of a transcript of Lord Julius' visit to Good Abbey to introduce the goat; the transformation of Dirty Drew & Fleagle into 3-piece suits; ditto Bran Mak Mufin; the elf bouncing with excitement over the news about the albatross; excerpts from a history of the election by Suenteus Po; the enigmatic back covers of #43 and #44; the street urchin vignette; the frostonite monologue; the crowd interpreting Elrod as a tumbler; the daydream thought balloons of the characters in the same issue (#43); this list could go on for pages if I stopped to pick up each issue.

I'd just like you to know these things are appreciated out here among your readership. The most frustrating thing about being a **CEREBUS** fan is having no one to crow over each issue with. I pace around the kitchen burning to call someone and say "did you **see** that panel on page 3? Was that **GREAT** or was it **GREAT**!?! and so on etc. etc. etc. etc.

As for the art, it's getting more subtle and more controlled and more interesting all the time. I loved Lord Julius and his pillow in 43 and the shot of Astoria & Moon Roach in #44 dipping out of the panel to reappear with mason jars. I loved the **Doonesbury** page on the election broadsides. **All** the characters are looking better all the time, and the layouts, backgrounds, and covers are consistently fascinating, funny and thought-provoking.

The other thing I'd like to say is that your care and involvement in going beyond the normal comic book structure is impressive and gratefully received. I adore Deni's warm, caring editorials (Thanks for being on the tour, Deni!), the detailed letters page and funny, incisive comments, and your considerate treatment of the readers. I just received a set of Diamondback cards, and it suddenly struck me that here was a **card game** that had come out of someone's imagination as part of a comic book: not a set of

CEREBUS ORIGINAL ART

That's right, I'm still selling Cerebus original artwork. $100 per page. Issues 30 through 35 are pretty well picked over, but everyone's taste is different it seems; there have been very few multiple orders for single pages (the possible exception being the "wee-wees in the sink" page which I could have sold six times over). Everyone who has included alternate selections has ended up with nothing lower than the second choice on their list. Certified cheques or money orders. Payable to Aardvark Vanaheim. Makes the ideal Christmas gift. Orders shipped within a week (now that Deni has help in the office). I reserve the right to reject discounts for quantity orders, but I also reserve the right to let my greed get the better of me. Make me an offer.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

plastic figures in a bubblepack to sell gum or underwear, not a marketing device, but part of an increasingly complex and interesting world of the imagination that is being created from **nothing**. It brought home to me the thought that you create each issue from 22 blank sheets of paper every month.

I don't know about your critics, but that impresses me. Keep it up. Feel pleased about it. You're doing an awesome thing and enriching people's lives with it.

Could I ask a few questions?

1 - What ever happened to Artemis Strong?
2 - Where has Cerebus put his sword?
3 - When did Astoria become Duchess of Parmoc?
4 - Could you bring in a few more Sepran soldiers?
5 - Ditto some Conniptin cheerleaders?
6 - Ditto Silverspoon? (I was delighted to see him as the Human Torch).
7 - Does Lord Julius still smoke the clay pipes he had in #14 and #15?
8 - Is Kevitch the cab driver or somebody else?
9 - What happened to the old prime minister?
10 - When are we going to see what Suenteus Po looks like?
11 - When are your birthdays?

Anything else I could say would be more fulsome praise and pleas for more of whatever you feel like cooking up for us. All best wishes from a diehard fan. P.S.: I asked a comic dealer what he's recommend to a customer who liked **Cerebus**. He said "I don't know. You're reading the top of the line already: anything else would be downhill".

Love, Janet McGuire
4804 Edgefield Road
Bethesda, MD. 20814

1 - Without Astoria to reinforce him, he got buried under several dozen heroic personalities refusing to admit they all have broken hearts.
2 - With his other stuff in a closet in the Ambassador Suite.
3 - When she married Lord Julius.
4 - Shoo' Shoo'
5 - Keep reading.
6 - Flame on, you big silly.
7 - No. They invented cigars between issues #22 and #23.
8 - No, Kevitch is a lot younger than the cab driver.
9 - He was forced to resign over gross mismanagement of the economy.
10 - Which one?
11 - Mine is May 17, 1956 and Deni's is September 30, 19 mumble, mumble.

Greetings and felicitations Dave, Deni, and Cerebus,

I was away for a while, so I got issues 40 and 41 at the same time when I got back. Definitely thoroughly enjoyable stories. It was a bit of a shock at first to find everybody jumping into bed together (Figuratively, that is) but, I got over it. Moon Roach was in top form. Nice to see Theresa again. Wonderful to see more of Elf; she's my favorite supporting character. I liked Neil the Horse. Am I the only person who liked the Salamanders? I would buy a book featuring either of these.

Okay, question and answer time:

1 - Is Elf bound to the Regency somehow? If so, will the end of High Society be the last we'll see of her? (I hope not - I'll be, like, apt to be upset).

2 - Did Cerebus or Bran Mac Mufin have the two priestesses? That wasn't clear to me.

3 - What's this with Astoria kissing Dirty Drew? I take it she hasn't been getting any from Cerebus? Come to think of it, their feelings for each other have never been defined. How does Cerebus feel about Astoria, and vice-versa?

4 - Seriously, how could Lord Julius possibly run a goat for Prime Minister? What happened to the incumbent?

5 - When High Society is over, will Cerebus get rid of that weak-willed over-educated snivelling city-dweller hair style? Say - howzabout Cerebus gets a mohawk and gets involved with Iest's radical punk element?

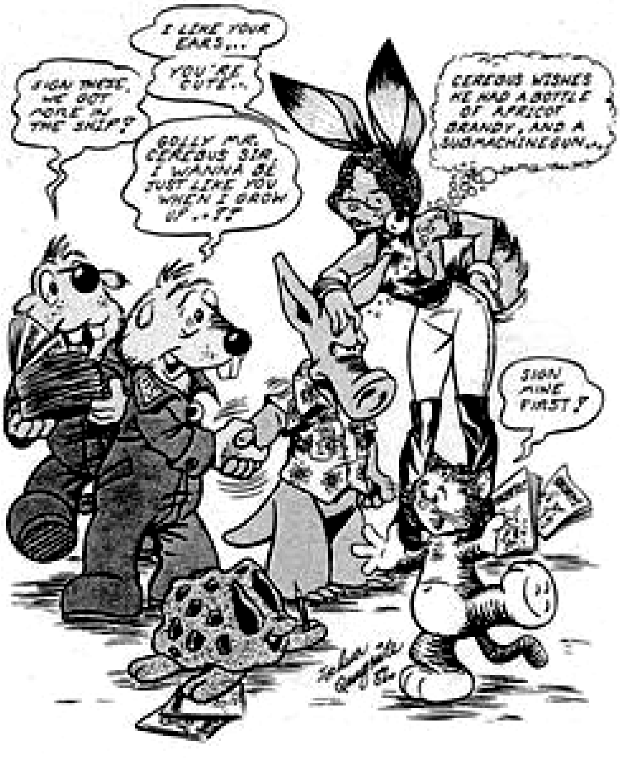
Concerning the Cerebus as killer controversy: I'm satisfied as long as I know Cerebus is still capable of killing someone. #36 certainly proved that.

Finally, to end things on a Bannonesque note, does Cerebus like chocolate covered ants and caviar on rye?

Lower interests rate or death!

Bret Fetzer
Rt. 1, Box 327-A
Spokane, WA. 99204

1 - (a) yes; (b) no
2 - Cerebus
3 - "I think I can use this person to get what I want" and ditto
4 - (a) Seriously' is not usually the way Lord Julius does anything. (b) He resigned in disgrace over gross mismanagement of the economy. (Call the plasterer Deni, this letter page has developed an echo).
5 - (a) It's growing out! It's growing out! (b) Who do you think he's been involved with for the last six issues?
6 - Only with seedless grapes.


SIGN THESE, WE GOT MORE IN THE SHIP?
I LIKE YOUR EARS...
YOU'RE CUTE...
GOLLY MR. CEREBUS SIR, I WANNA BE JUST LIKE YOU WHEN I GROW UP..!?
CEREBUS WISHES HE HAD A BOTTLE OF APRICOT BRANDY, AND A SUBMACHINEGUN...
SIGN MINE FIRST!

Joshua Quagmire, soon to be extremely famous and probably as terminally modest as ever, submitted this drawing of Cutey Bunny, the Space Gophers and Fatty Tubbins. It was a pleasure meeting him in Santa Monica on the tour. Watch for a four page Cutey Bunny story in Unique sometime soon . . . and you can still order a copy of Cutey Bunny #1 from Joshua (autographed even) for $1.50 from J. Quagmire Enterprises, P.O. Box 2221, Hollywood, CA. 90028.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni,

It was great to see you on your U.S. tour. Hope it was a success and becomes a regular (yearly?) event. I neglected to mention it when I saw you, but your visit coincided with Philadephia's "Art Week". I thought it rather fitting.

Just thought I'd toss a few ideas and questions your way. I'll try to remember to number the questions.

I assume for the oft-repeated statement that the High Society Series will end about issue #50, that Cerebus will not keep the post of Prime Minister if he does win, or will embark on a crusade to bring about the Aardvarkian Empire. (the latter would, no doubt, delight those who keep writing to request more gore).

I would like to congratulate you on the fine way you handle the "personality" characters (Groucho, Rodney, Cleese, etc.). Normally I find such guest-shots stiff and strained. Yours are well-thought-out, in character, and flow with the story -- they are not just tossed in for exploitation (ie: S*P*R*M*N* meets Muhammed Ali). I'd certainly like to hear how the Cerebus radio show handles these characters. I've heard few **really good** Groucho imitations.

Howcum #1: Why are Cerebus and Elfquest omitted from most alternate and underground listings and price guides?

Irony Dept.: I suppose the completists will now **have** to find a copy of the counterfeit Cerebus #1, thereby causing it to increase in value. There just ain't no justice!

When you were in Philly I pointed out that the October issue of National Lampoon had an aardvark poem in its "letters" section. (Oh. THAT guy".) Well, the November issue has a piece in its "True Section" that tells of an incident that took place at a Motor Hotel in Kitchener. AHA! Can it be mere coincidence that these items appear on the eve of, and during, your U.S. tour? (That's one for the conspiracy freaks) - (It's also question #2 - no answer expected).

In closing I'd like to echo the sentiments expressed by Chris Green in #41's comment. Keep up the good work. Cerebus and Elfquest are the only publications that I buy every issue of.

Best of Luck,

Raymond L. Rooney
200 Dupont Street
Philadelphia, PA. 19127

We are already planning Tour '83 and would encourage shops that are interested to contact Deni with their addresses and the name of a responsible employee (or an irresponsible one, if that is all you have).

Howcum #1. Beats me. I was pleased with the coverage of "Groundlevel Comics" in Jay Kinney's Underground Price Guide. Probably as more titles in the Elfquest and Cerebus formats (Cutey Bunny, Ismet, Domino Roach, Eclipse, First Kingdom) appear, we will begin to look more like a separate classification -- like colour comics (DC, Marvel, First Comics, Pacific Comics, Charlton, et al).

Irony Dept. This is entirely up to the Cerebus fans involved. We met a particularly anarchistic bunch of Cerebus fans in California who advocated stealing illegal Cerebus figurines and counterfeit #1's. I must admit I found the reasoning somewhat twisted, but not altogether unattractive (it might be interesting to see if you could be prosecuted for stealing a counterfeit comic book).

Question #2. No answer given.

Dear Dave and Deni,

First of all, I'd like to express interest in acquiring a tape of that radio show, if one ever becomes available. But try to keep it reasonably priced, okay?

Well, I told this to the Comic Reader already, but in case you don't read it, I'll tell you two: Those very nice ads that Richard (Fruit n' Veggies) Bruning is preparing for you keep on appearing a month, or in the case of the Comics Journal with its screwed up publication schedule, two months late! I bought Cerebus 41 the same day I got the Reader in the mail with an ad for #40! So try to tell Rich to skip a month or something, so he can get back on track.

About this issue: Who is this Theresa person? Is this the same Theresa from the Woman Thing issues, the only issues of Cerebus I didn't like at all? If so, what's she doing with Astoria? If not, what's she doing with Astoria? Dave, you may know what's going on, but unless you tell us (the readers), we don't! So please, please cease the between issues happenings! You've got 300 issues to work with, you can slow down.

I like this issue a lot more than the previous one. I think I'm starting to warm up to this Campaign storyline. And so that duck statue did turn out to be something after all! Hmm . . . . quite interesting.

I realize it must be quite hectic with your monthly schedule, but it seems to me your art is slipping quite a bit from the start of High Society. You seem to be drawing with ink, not bothering to pencil, more and more -- I notice it on a lot of Mac Mufin's faces, and on all of page seven -- and it's giving your work a bad look. Try to tighten up a little, please.

Don't feel bad -- I wouldn't complain if I didn't care. Cerebus is my number one favorite comic now. (You just pulled ahead of MOKF) of course, you-re not as good a drawer as Gene Day yet -- but someday, someday. . . . .

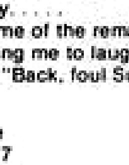
I am finding that some of the remarks that Fleagle and Moon Roach make are causing me to laugh a lot . . . . thank you.

And in closing . . . . "Back, foul Suburbanite!"

Brian Doherty
11598 West Ride Drive
Jacksonville, FL. 32217

On the subject of the late appearance of the Cerebus ads, Deni sends Richard copies of the first ten pages as soon as they are finished. Since this is only two weeks before the book goes to print, it does not allow for him to work far ahead and I certainly have no intentions of working two months ahead so the ads appear in advance. The ads are intended to attract new readers. I would assume Cerebus fans will buy each issue as it comes out no matter what the ads say. As well, I only authorize Deni to send out the pages when no surprises are endangered (i.e. Sending out ads for "The Deciding Vote" before "Election Night" hits the stands).

Yes that was the same Theresa from the Cerebus stories you didn't like (thank you for pointing that out). Astoria took her on as an assistant. I don't want to slow down and I don't want to stop alluding to between issue events. Sorry. I also don't know what you mean by tightening up my work. It comes out the way it comes out. Try scanning an issue before buying it for "tightness" if it bothers you that much. If Cerebus is your number one favourite comic, I'd hate to read a letter to your least favourite.



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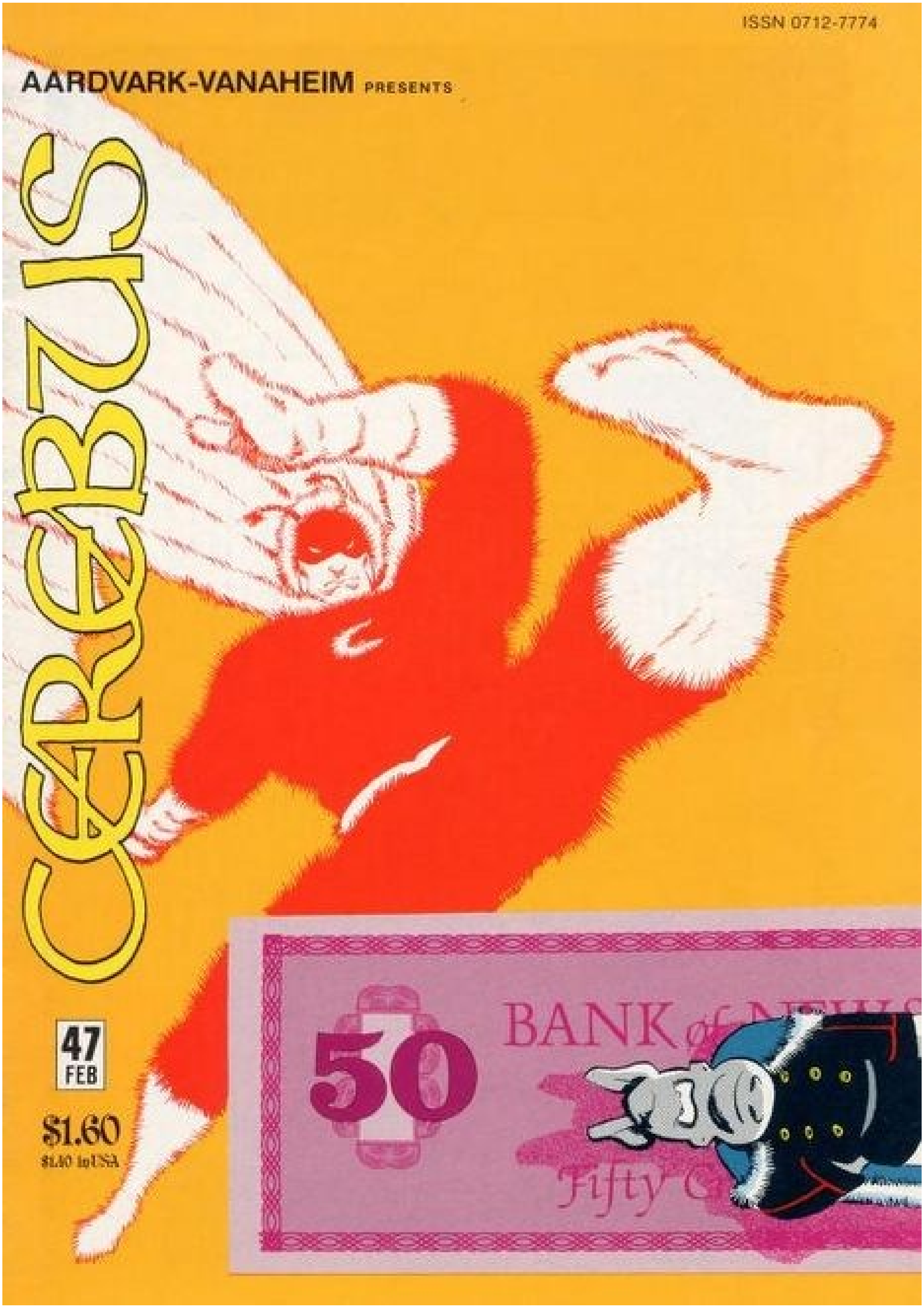
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS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$1.60
$1.40 in USA

A Note from the Publisher

FIRST CANADIAN TOUR
JULY 1983

Most of the ideas for projects and the juggling of dates comes to me while listening to a little rock-n-roll and trying to relax before going to sleep. Lately, there seems to be a lot of need for that planning. Where six months ago I was bemoaning every weekend that I was bored and wanted something to do, lately I'm finding the pace a bit frantic. Of course, the US Tour took care of any restlessness I had felt at the time. In fact, Dave and I enjoyed our US Tour so much that we have begun planning our 1983 Canadian Tour. So far we have plans to start in Victoria, B.C. on July 1st and move east from there through Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. We will finish the tour on the weekend of July 15-17 at Maplecon 5 in Ottawa.

This month has been a pretty busy one for both Dave and I. Two shops in our area, Now and Then Books and the Silver Snail have moved to larger locations and had signing parties to celebrate their expansions.

At Now & Then Books (in Kitchener) I finally had my chance to talk face to face with Michael T. Gilbert. It's great to find out that someone I've worked to publish who had seemed a terrific fellow over the phone was just as nice in person. I think I'm going to like publishing Strange Brew with Michael. The next one is already in the production stages.

Craig Russell and Richard Pini were there, as well as Arn Saba. Arn has been working quite hard on his book "Neil the Horse, Comics and Stories" since his return to Toronto in December. I have always enjoyed the free and open style he uses for Neil and his friends (especially Mamselle Poupée) and have high hopes for his book. It was rewarding for me to sit and watch people coming up and asking both Arn (in his "Neil" stories in Unique) and Michael T. (in Strange Brew) for autographs. If they got even half the pleasure I did, the efforts put into the work were well worth it. On the whole it was a very enjoyable afternoon. It was a time for people in alternative comics to get together and compare notes. I only wish we could do it more often.

The following weekend we spent in the country with a friend. I must say it was nice to take a breather like that. It turned out that we needed it because the next weekend Dave and Karen (my assistant) and I went up to Toronto for the Silver Snail's grand opening. Chris Claremont and Marshall Rogers were guests there as well, and the store was packed right up until we left for supper around six. Ron VanLeun deserves a great deal of credit for having designed a shop that can be both functional as well as really nice to look at. If you live in the Toronto area I suggest you check it out. The address is on his ad inside the book.

It always seems strange to me that the times we enjoy the most seem to tire me out the most. We both spent the next day sleeping and watching TV, trying to recover.

Considering the plans we have for the Canadian Tour in July, as well as a **very tentative** plan for a European Tour in October, it's no wonder we feel exhausted by the weekend. Do you sometimes get the feeling that Dave and I are a pair of masochists? It certainly helps that we **want** to go out and talk to you. We **want** to know what you're thinking.

Deni

ANNOUNCEMENT

As of now, Aardvark-Vanaheim will be handling subscriptions and single issue orders on all Aardvark-Vanaheim books.

One year subscription of Cerebus $25.00 U.S., includes postage & handling.

More information next issue

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK is published fifteen times a year by Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc., P.O. Box 1674, Station 'C', Kitchener, Ontario Canada N2G 4R2, including three "Swords of Cerebus" in winter, spring and fall. All contents © 1983 Dave Sim. Any inquiries regarding use of the characters, images, or situations depicted should be addressed to Deni Sim. No unauthrorized reproduction allowed except for review or other Journalistic purpose. Advertising rates furnished on request. Printed in Canada by Preney Print and Litho Inc., Windsor, Ontario.

CEREBUS

VOL 1 NO 47 FEBRUARY 1983

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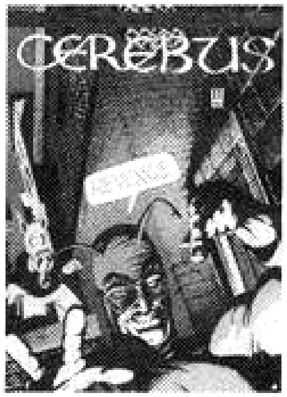

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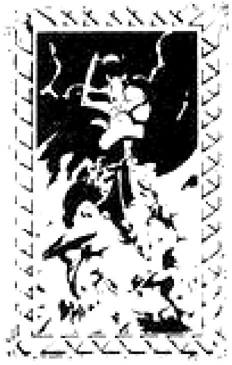

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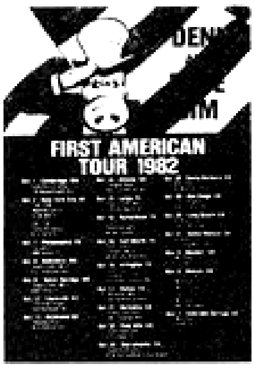

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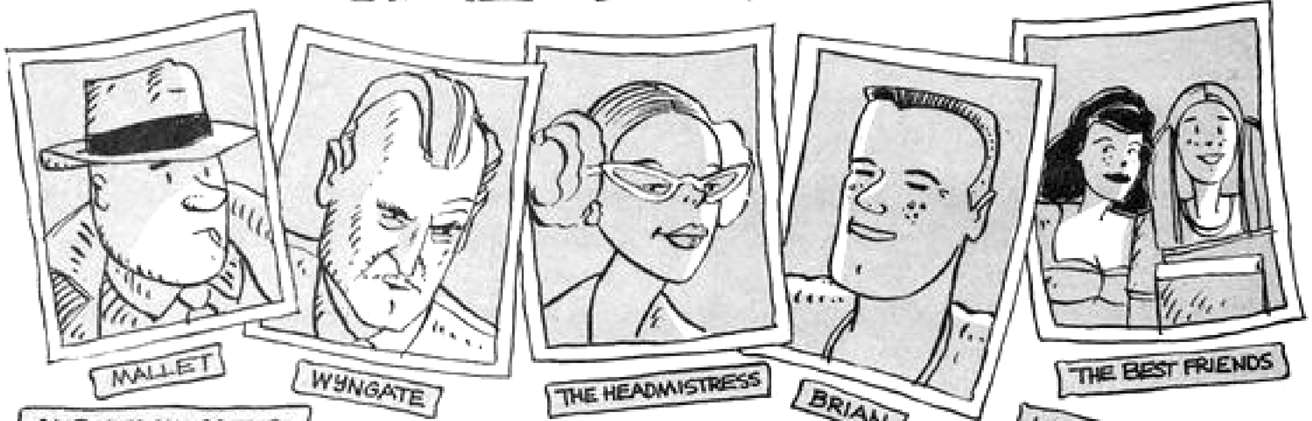
A UNIQUE STORY

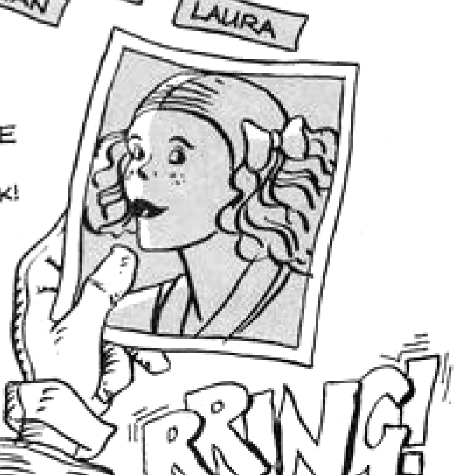
DICK MALLET

STORY: JOHN E. SECH; ART: MICHAEL CHERKAS
ADDITIONAL SCRIPTING: LARRY HANCOCK.

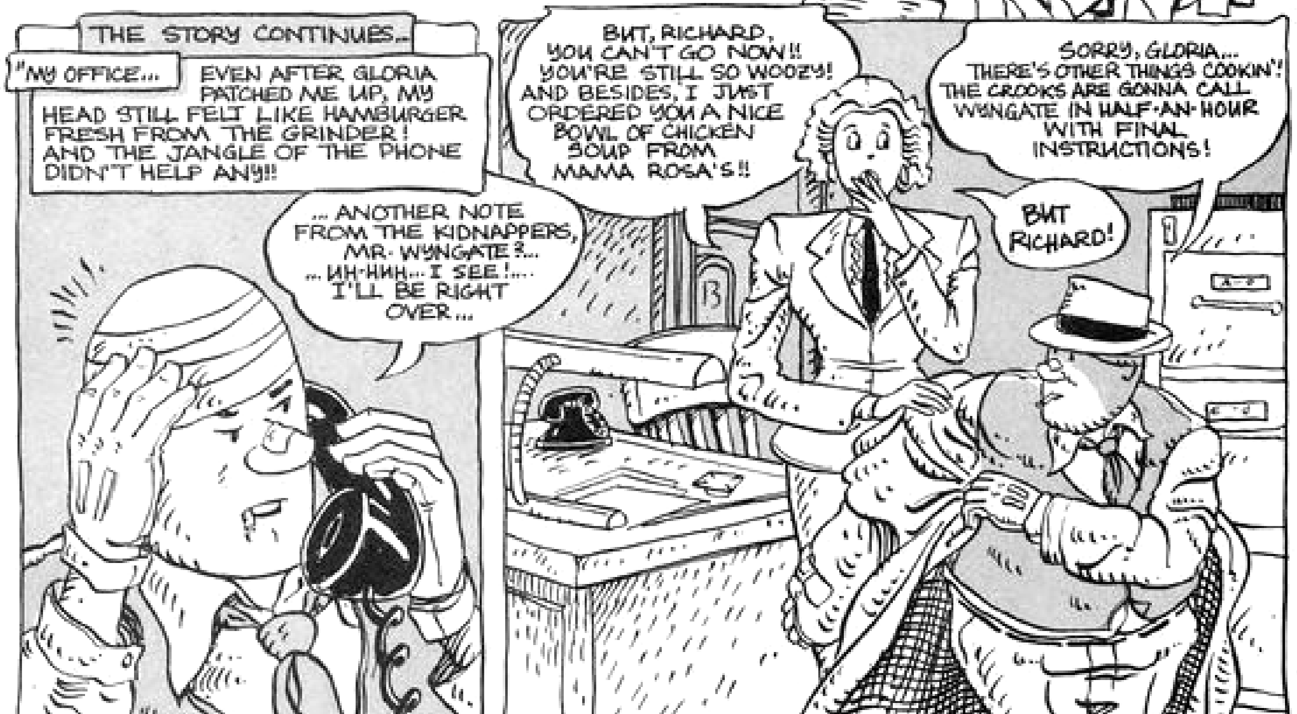

MALLET
WYNGATE
THE HEADMISTRESS
BRIAN
THE BEST FRIENDS

OUR STORY SO FAR: ARTHUR WYNGATE WAS MORE UPSET AT BEING GOUGED FOR A MILLION BUCKS THAN BY THE FACT THAT HIS DAUGHTER, LAURA, HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED!... HIS LOVE FOR THE KID SEEMED TO BE AS SMALL AS THE ADVANCE HE PAID ME TO FIND HER...

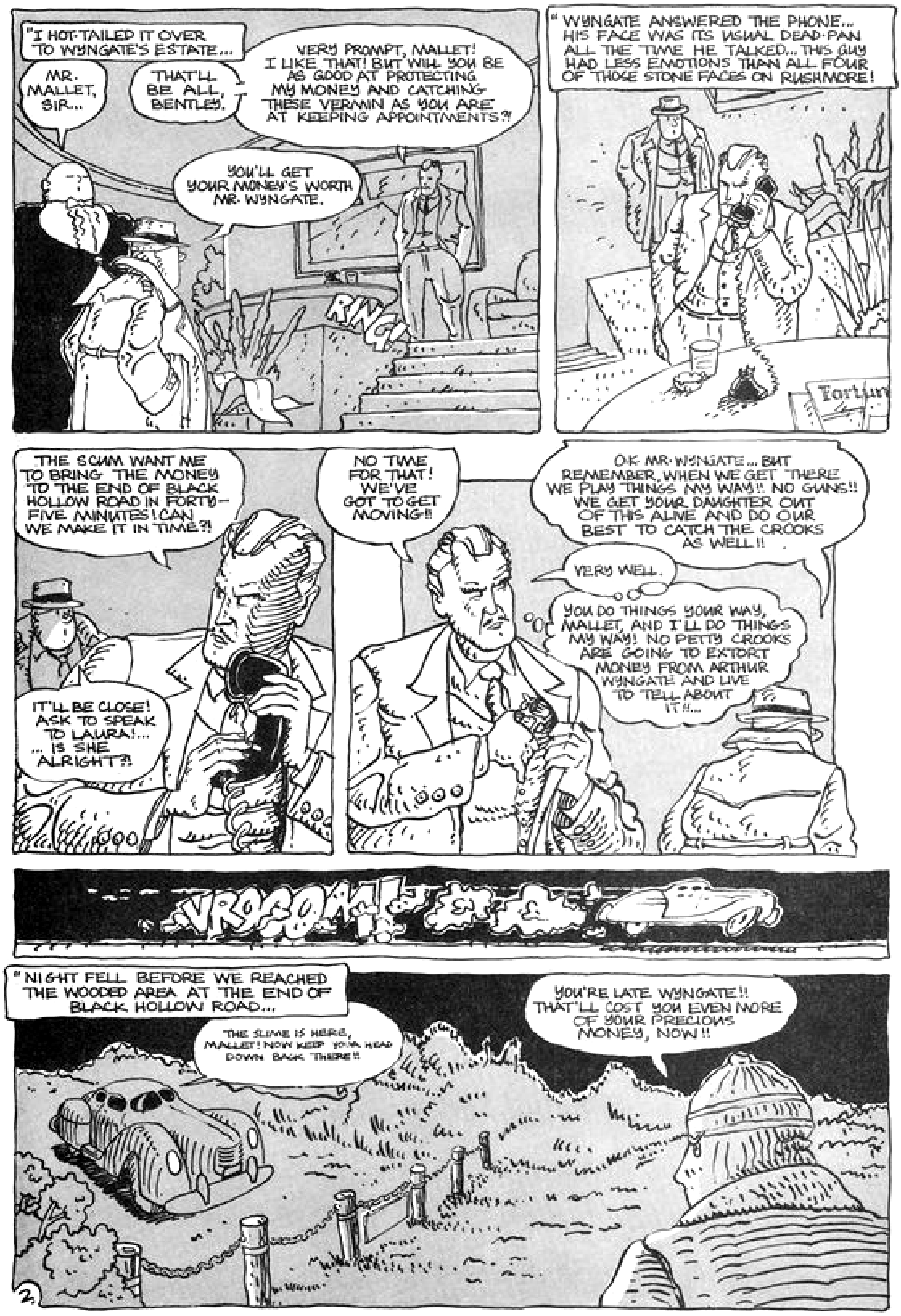
AFTER VISITING THE HEADMISTRESS AT LAURA'S PRIVATE SCHOOL, I LATCHED ONTO A STROKE OF LUCK AS HER BEST FRIENDS CLUED ME TO HER BOYFRIEND, BRIAN SOUTHWELL, AT A NEARBY COLLEGE... BUT HE WASN'T IN ANY MOOD TO TALK! ...INSTEAD, HIS FRIENDS USED ME AS A TACKLING DUMMY...

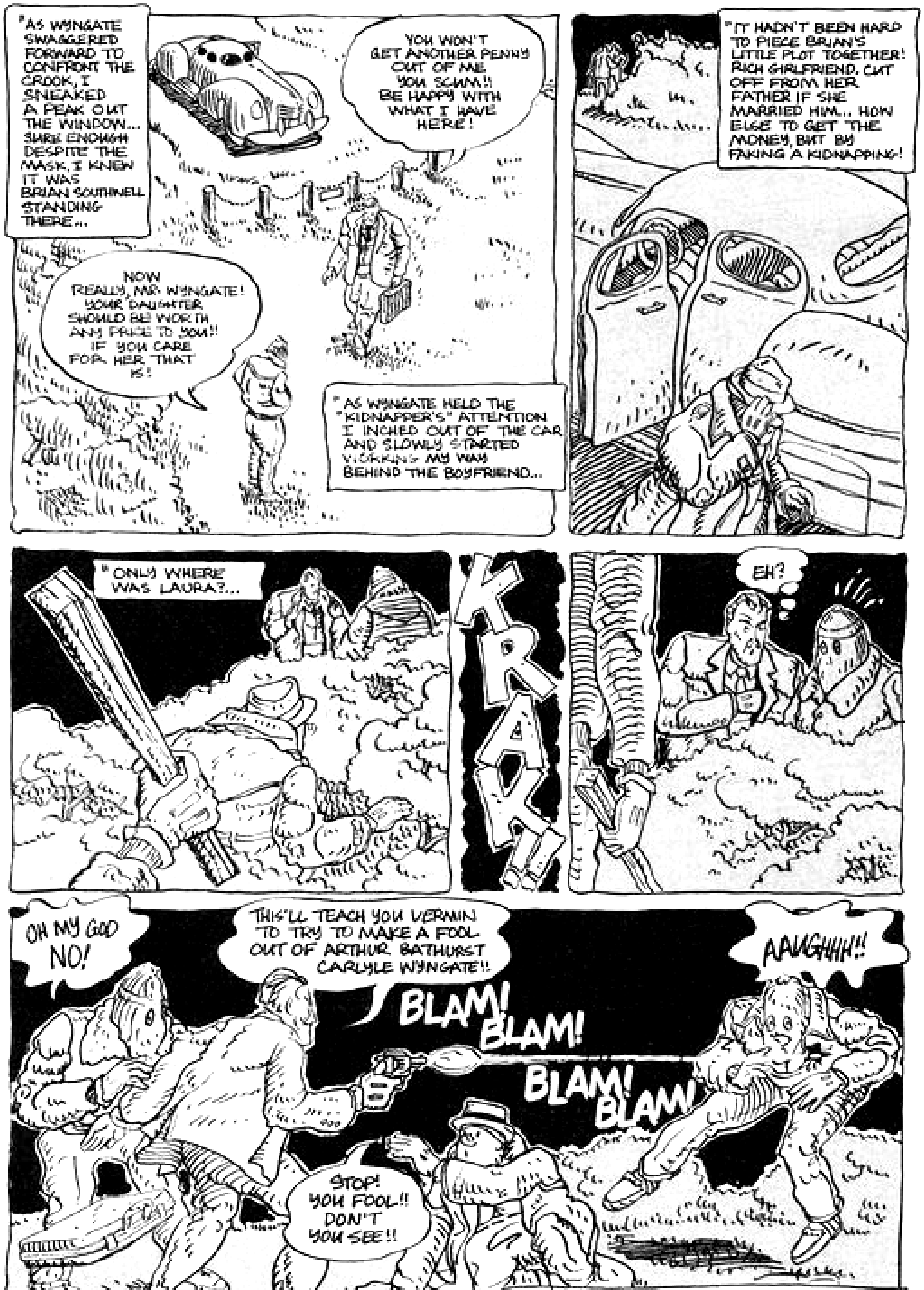

LAURA
RRING!

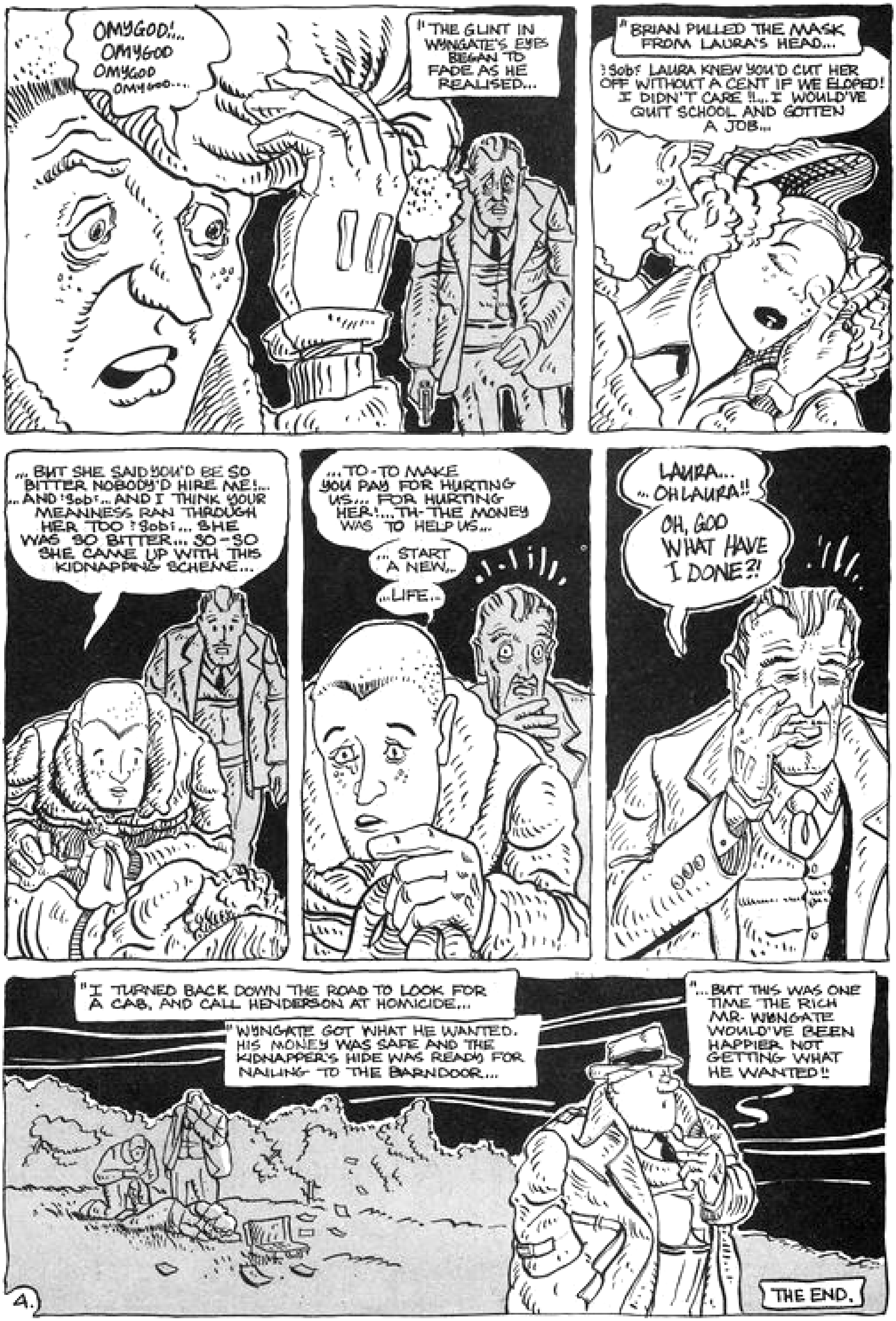
The Missing SCHOOLGIRL PART·2


THE STORY CONTINUES...
"MY OFFICE... EVEN AFTER GLORIA PATCHED ME UP, MY HEAD STILL FELT LIKE HAMBURGER FRESH FROM THE GRINDER! AND THE JANGLE OF THE PHONE DIDN'T HELP ANY!!
... ANOTHER NOTE FROM THE KIDNAPPERS, MR. WYNGATE?... ...UH-HUH... I SEE!.... I'LL BE RIGHT OVER...
BUT, RICHARD, YOU CAN'T GO NOW!! YOU'RE STILL SO WOOZY! AND BESIDES, I JUST ORDERED YOU A NICE BOWL OF CHICKEN SOUP FROM MAMA ROSA'S!!
SORRY, GLORIA... THERE'S OTHER THINGS COOKIN'! THE CROOKS ARE GONNA CALL WYNGATE IN HALF-AN-HOUR WITH FINAL INSTRUCTIONS!
BUT RICHARD!
13

DICK MALLET 13 COPYRIGHT © 1982 by JOHN ELLIS SECH & MICHAEL CHERKAS.


"I HOT-TAILED IT OVER TO WYNGATE'S ESTATE...
MR. MALLET, SIR...
THAT'LL BE ALL, BENTLEY.
VERY PROMPT, MALLET! I LIKE THAT! BUT WILL YOU BE AS GOOD AT PROTECTING MY MONEY AND CATCHING THESE VERMIN AS YOU ARE AT KEEPING APPOINTMENTS?!
YOU'LL GET YOUR MONEY'S WORTH MR. WYNGATE.
RING!
"WYNGATE ANSWERED THE PHONE... HIS FACE WAS ITS USUAL DEAD-PAN ALL THE TIME HE TALKED... THIS GUY HAD LESS EMOTIONS THAN ALL FOUR OF THOSE STONE FACES ON RUSHMORE!
Fortun
THE SCUM WANT ME TO BRING THE MONEY TO THE END OF BLACK HOLLOW ROAD IN FORTY-FIVE MINUTES! CAN WE MAKE IT IN TIME?!
IT'LL BE CLOSE! ASK TO SPEAK TO LAURA!... ... IS SHE ALRIGHT?!
NO TIME FOR THAT! WE'VE GOT TO GET MOVING!!
O.K. MR. WYNGATE... BUT REMEMBER, WHEN WE GET THERE WE PLAY THINGS MY WAY!! NO GUNS!! WE GET YOUR DAUGHTER OUT OF THIS ALIVE AND DO OUR BEST TO CATCH THE CROOKS AS WELL!!
VERY WELL.
YOU DO THINGS YOUR WAY, MALLET, AND I'LL DO THINGS MY WAY! NO PETTY CROOKS ARE GOING TO EXTORT MONEY FROM ARTHUR WYNGATE AND LIVE TO TELL ABOUT IT!!...
VROOOM!!
"NIGHT FELL BEFORE WE REACHED THE WOODED AREA AT THE END OF BLACK HOLLOW ROAD...
THE SLIME IS HERE, MALLET! NOW KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN BACK THERE!!
YOU'RE LATE WYNGATE!! THAT'LL COST YOU EVEN MORE OF YOUR PRECIOUS MONEY, NOW!!


"AS WYNGATE SWAGGERED FORWARD TO CONFRONT THE CROOK, I SNEAKED A PEAK OUT THE WINDOW... SURE ENOUGH DESPITE THE MASK, I KNEW IT WAS BRIAN SOUTHWELL STANDING THERE...
YOU WON'T GET ANOTHER PENNY OUT OF ME YOU SCUM!! BE HAPPY WITH WHAT I HAVE HERE!
NOW REALLY, MR. WYNGATE! YOUR DAUGHTER SHOULD BE WORTH ANY PRICE TO YOU!! IF YOU CARE FOR HER THAT IS!
"AS WYNGATE HELD THE "KIDNAPPER'S" ATTENTION I INCHED OUT OF THE CAR AND SLOWLY STARTED WORKING MY WAY BEHIND THE BOYFRIEND...
"IT HADN'T BEEN HARD TO PIECE BRIAN'S LITTLE PLOT TOGETHER! RICH GIRLFRIEND, CUT OFF FROM HER FATHER IF SHE MARRIED HIM... HOW ELSE TO GET THE MONEY, BUT BY FAKING A KIDNAPPING!
"ONLY WHERE WAS LAURA?...
KRAK
EH?
OH MY GOD NO!
THIS'LL TEACH YOU VERMIN TO TRY TO MAKE A FOOL OUT OF ARTHUR BATHURST CARLYLE WYNGATE!!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM
AAUGHHH!!
STOP! YOU FOOL!! DON'T YOU SEE!!
"WYNGATE'S EYES GLEAMED AS HE PUNCTUATED HIS NAME WITH BLASTS FROM THE ROD IN HIS HAND...


OMYGOD!... OMYGOD OMYGOD OMYGOD...
"THE GLINT IN WYNGATE'S EYES BEGAN TO FADE AS HE REALISED...
"BRIAN PULLED THE MASK FROM LAURA'S HEAD...
!Sob! LAURA KNEW YOU'D CUT HER OFF WITHOUT A CENT IF WE ELOPED! I DIDN'T CARE !!... I WOULD'VE QUIT SCHOOL AND GOTTEN A JOB...
... BUT SHE SAID YOU'D BE SO BITTER NOBODY'D HIRE ME!... ... AND !Sob! ... AND I THINK YOUR MEANNESS RAN THROUGH HER TOO !Sob! ... SHE WAS SO BITTER... SO-SO SHE CAME UP WITH THIS KIDNAPPING SCHEME...
... TO-TO MAKE YOU PAY FOR HURTING US... FOR HURTING HER!... TH-THE MONEY WAS TO HELP US...
... START A NEW..
..LIFE..
LAURA... ... OH LAURA!!
OH, GOD WHAT HAVE I DONE?!
"I TURNED BACK DOWN THE ROAD TO LOOK FOR A CAB, AND CALL HENDERSON AT HOMICIDE...
"WYNGATE GOT WHAT HE WANTED. HIS MONEY WAS SAFE AND THE KIDNAPPER'S HIDE WAS READY FOR NAILING TO THE BARNDOOR...
"... BUT THIS WAS ONE TIME THE RICH MR. WYNGATE WOULD'VE BEEN HAPPIER NOT GETTING WHAT HE WANTED!!
THE END.
4.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Aardvark-Vanaheim Photo by Robert W. Rittinger

You didn't think we'd miss an opportunity for an alternative comix group shot at the Now and Then Books Grand Opening Party, now did you? In the back row (just because they don't draw) are Richard Pini (bearded) and Deni Sim (not bearded). In the front row, left to right, P. Craig Russell (lightly bearded), Dave Sim (shapelessly bearded) and Michael (give me a "T") Gilbert (paste-on bearded)

Dear Mrs. Sim:

Three comments.

(1) I'd like to see you publish a "My Impressions During Our Tour" article in one issue of Cerebus. I'm sure you have a lot to say and that it would make interesting and enjoyable reading.

(2) Michael Gilbert is sensational. Far and away the best of the artists who've had their work published in Cerebus. His second piece, the one with the man, daughter and dog, was like poetry. All the pieces were there but you still had to figure out the story, and two different readers could give two different interpretations.

(3) Your fan club. I got disturbed when I saw a full page ad for the Cerebus fan club in one of your issues. I've been a member of this club since it started. So far this year I received one mailing for spring, 1982. Nothing afterwards. When I met you here in New York you said you were having problems getting fan club material out on time. The year is now drawing to a close and I've yet to receive the second of the four annual fan club mailings. How can you advertise membership in the club when you, or the guy running it in California, or both of you, are unable to fulfill your side of the bargain. Hope you don't mind me being a little annoyed. What gives with the fan club anyway? Keep up the great work. I wish you

CEREBUS ORIGINAL ART

That's right, I'm still selling Cerebus original artwork. $100 per page. Issues 30 through 35 are pretty well picked over, but everyone's taste is different it seems; there have been very few multiple orders for single pages (the possible exception being the "wee-wees in the sink" page which I could have sold six times over). Everyone who has included alternate selections has ended up with nothing lower than the second choice on their list. Certified cheques or money orders. Payable to Aardvark Vanaheim. Makes the ideal Christmas gift. Orders shipped within a week (now that Deni has help in the office). I reserve the right to reject discounts for quantity orders, but I also reserve the right to let my greed get the better of me. Make me an offer.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

continued success with Cerebus and your other projects.

Larry Adler
324 East 74th Street
New York N.Y., 10021

(1) We are expecting to release a special "Tour Impressions" article in the upcoming Cerebus Collector (which we have decided to do as a semi regular publication in a comic book rather than trade paperback format).

(2) We quite agree with your enthusiasm about Michael T's work. I hope to be able to do a Cerebus/Wraith cross-over with him someday.

(3) Fred Patten was forced to give up the Fan Club because of some other commitments. Steve Hendricks will be getting caught up as soon as he can get a newsletter issue assembled from the material on hand and mailed out. Anyone who doesn't wish to renew their membership will still receive all newsletters and premiums for the balance owing them. We'll let you know more when we hear from Steve.

Dear Friends,

Now at last it can be told!

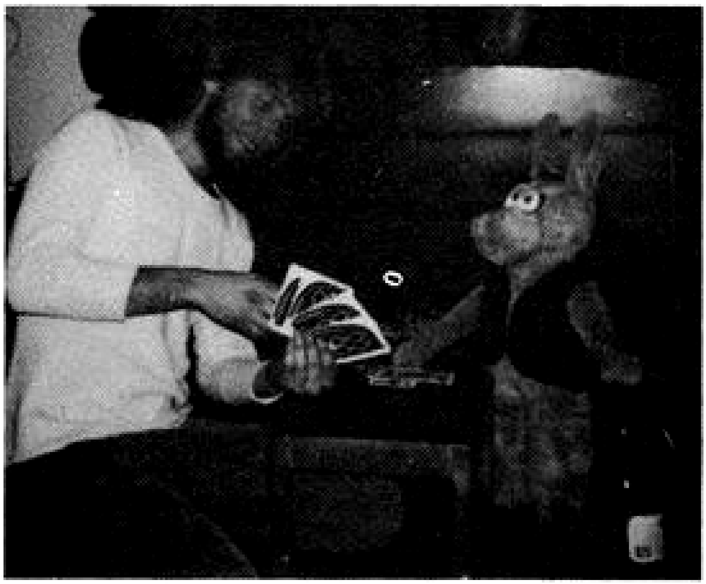
THE ORIGIN OF CEREBUS

Back in the early seventies when I was freelancing for Richard Comely, I used to bemoan the fact that Canadians had no cultural base to draw from in terms of a creative spirit. Our American friends to the south had the pulps, the golden age comics, EC's, tons of science fiction/fantasy/mystery digests, radio and movie serials, movies, television and we had Mounties and a railway! For the oldtimers that remember, we did have the Canadian whites, comic books with color covers but black and white interiors. Cerebus the comicbook carries on this proud tradition once more.

There was one Canadian cultural tradition that should not be overlooked by future scholars and historians, and that was Bugs Bunny cartoons rerun endlessly at 5:00 P.M. every Saturday on the CBC. Initially this seemed to have had no visible effect of those children that grew up with this event, beside the fact that almost every one of them can sing the theme from the Bugs Bunny show better than their own national anthem!

The second greatest effect this television show has produced has been the strange mutation characters therein have undergone inside the mind of Dave Sim. One of the most obvious has been the transformation of Foghorn Leghorn into Elrod. The speech has undergone a subtle shift. Foghorn Leghorn was a white chicken, rooster that is. Elric was an albino swordsman. Elrod is a cowardly albino swordsman who talks like Foghorn Leghorn. A big white chicken? Albino, white, chicken... get it? It's a joke son! Look at me when I'm talkin' at ya!

Dirty Drew and Dirty Fleagle although Yosemite



Cerebus Itty and Ron by Ron's Mom

Pictured at right is Bellaire Michigan's Ron Langs; winner of the "Win a Diamondback Tournament with Cerebus Christmas Morning" contest. Our intrepid aardvark looks on, unconvinced, as Ron tries to explain how he won with four priestesses.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

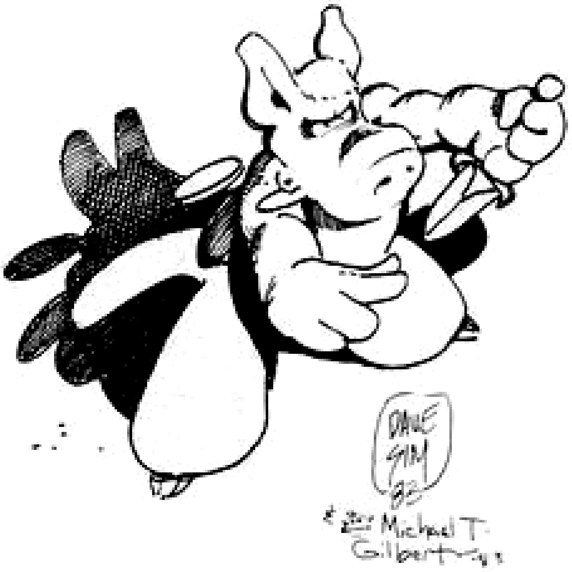
Sam clones in life size also owe a debt to the newspaper strip Tumbleweeds for their existence. That's right, Snake-Eyes and his younger baby brother Snooky. Superimpose Yosemite Sam on these two characters and you get the McGrew brothers.

Thus we come to our star, a short grey animal with long ears. You guessed it! Cerebus is none other than Bugs Bunny! If you don't believe me look over the last 45 issues of Cerebus noting the expressions on his face and the angle of his ears. Gotcha!

Fathoming profound things in Alberta,

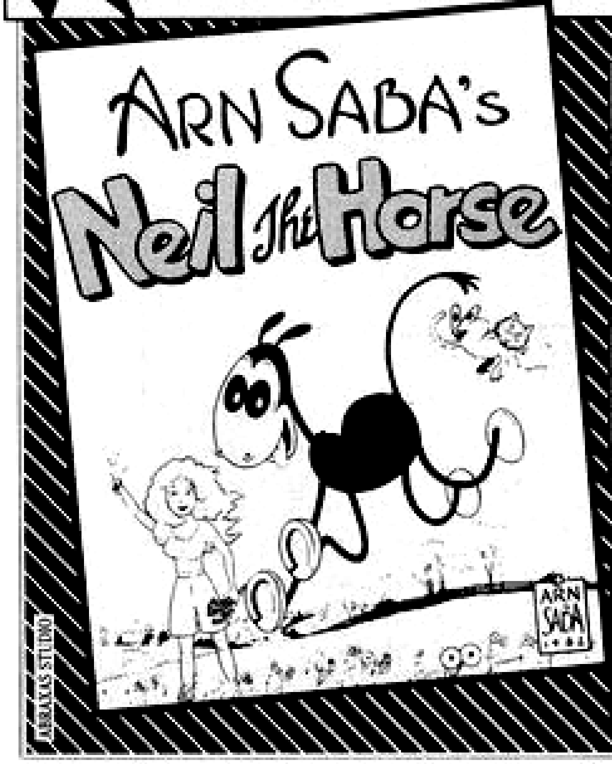
Laurence W. Matishak
No. 203, 4912 - 54 Street
Red Deer, Alberta
T4N 2G8

I don't think that was the "Origin of Cerebus" everyone's been waiting for, Laurence, but I guess it'll do until a real one comes along.



Sketch from Grand Opening Party for Now & Then Books. Courtesy of Dave Sim (pencils) and Michael T. Gilbert (inks).

Aardvark-Vanaheim *presents its first mini-series...*



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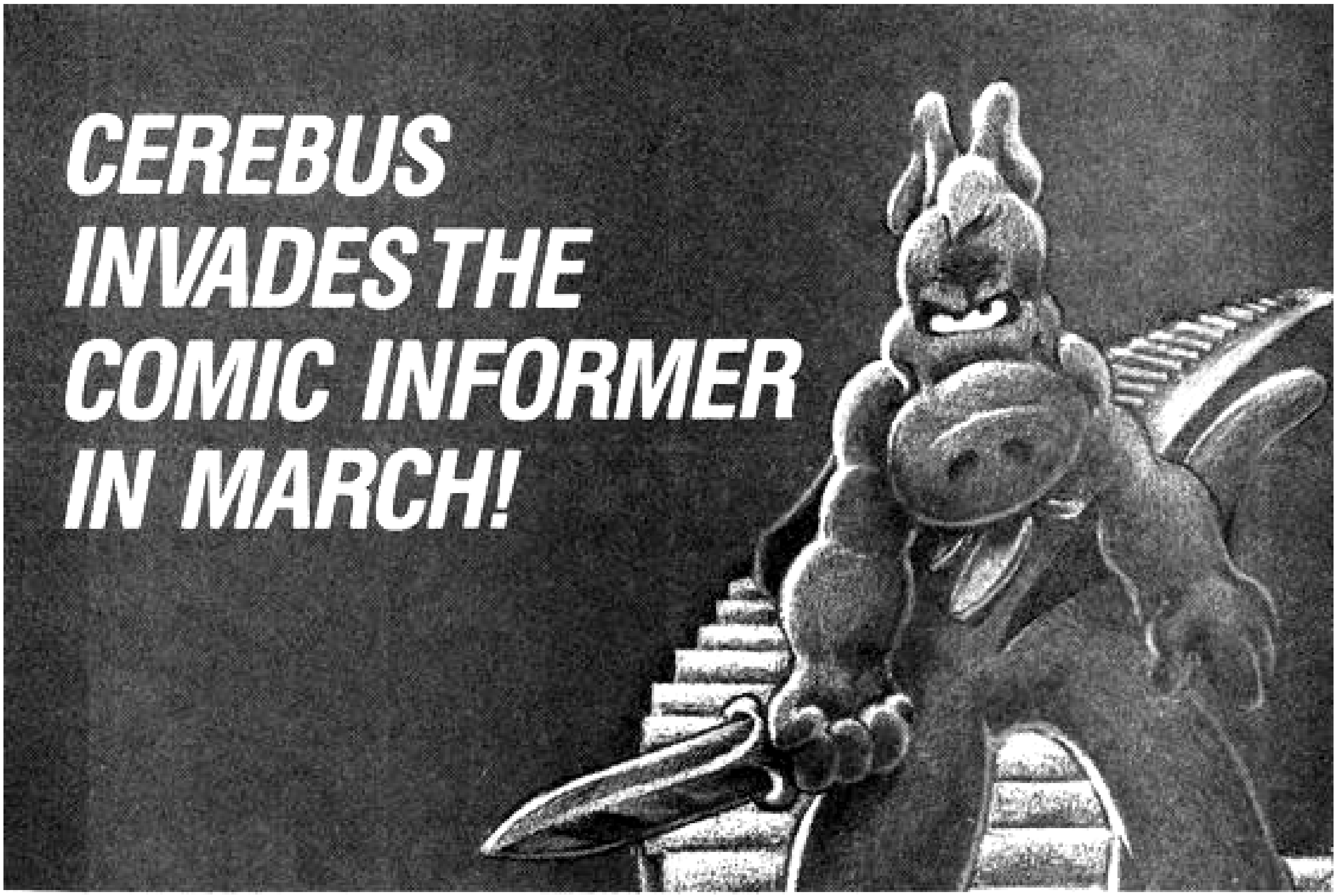
CEREBUS INVADES THE COMIC INFORMER IN MARCH!



COMIC INFORMER

© 1987 Dave Sim

In the wake of all the Dave Sim interviews suddenly popping up everywhere, comes the one that was found, lost, then found again from within the depths of Canada itself.

Also in the Eighth issue of the Comic Informer:

☐ We begin a two issue tour of New York City's comic world through the eyes of a certain semi-famous magazine editor.

☐ After the smoke clears and the cannons grow silent, what does the *Man* at Marvel have to say? Find out in our interview with Marvel Comics' Editor-in-chief, *Jim Shooter.*

And thats only the beginning! So look for *Comic Informer* No. 8, on sale in March at fine dealers everywhere or send $1.95 plus .50¢ to cover postage and handling to:

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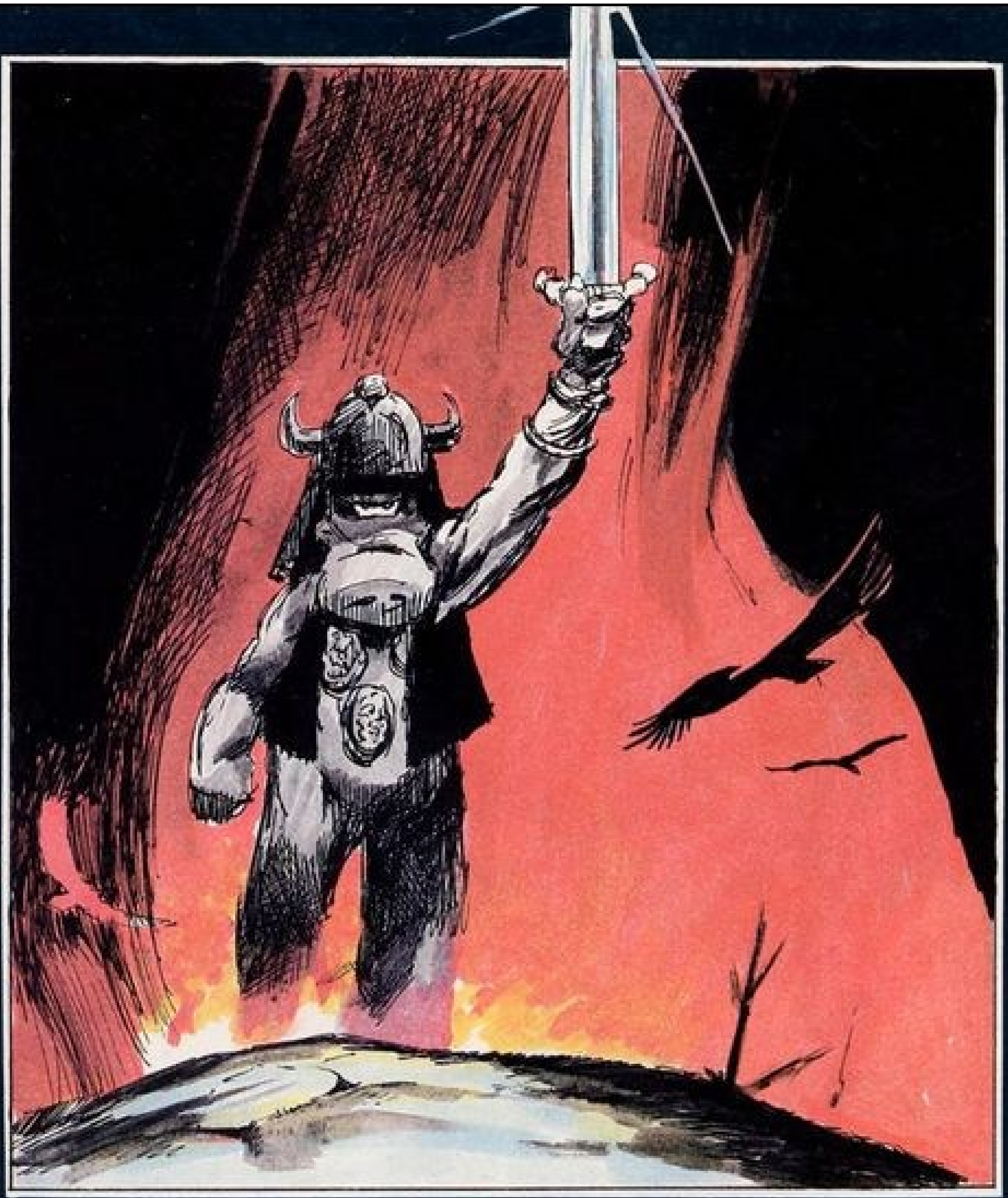
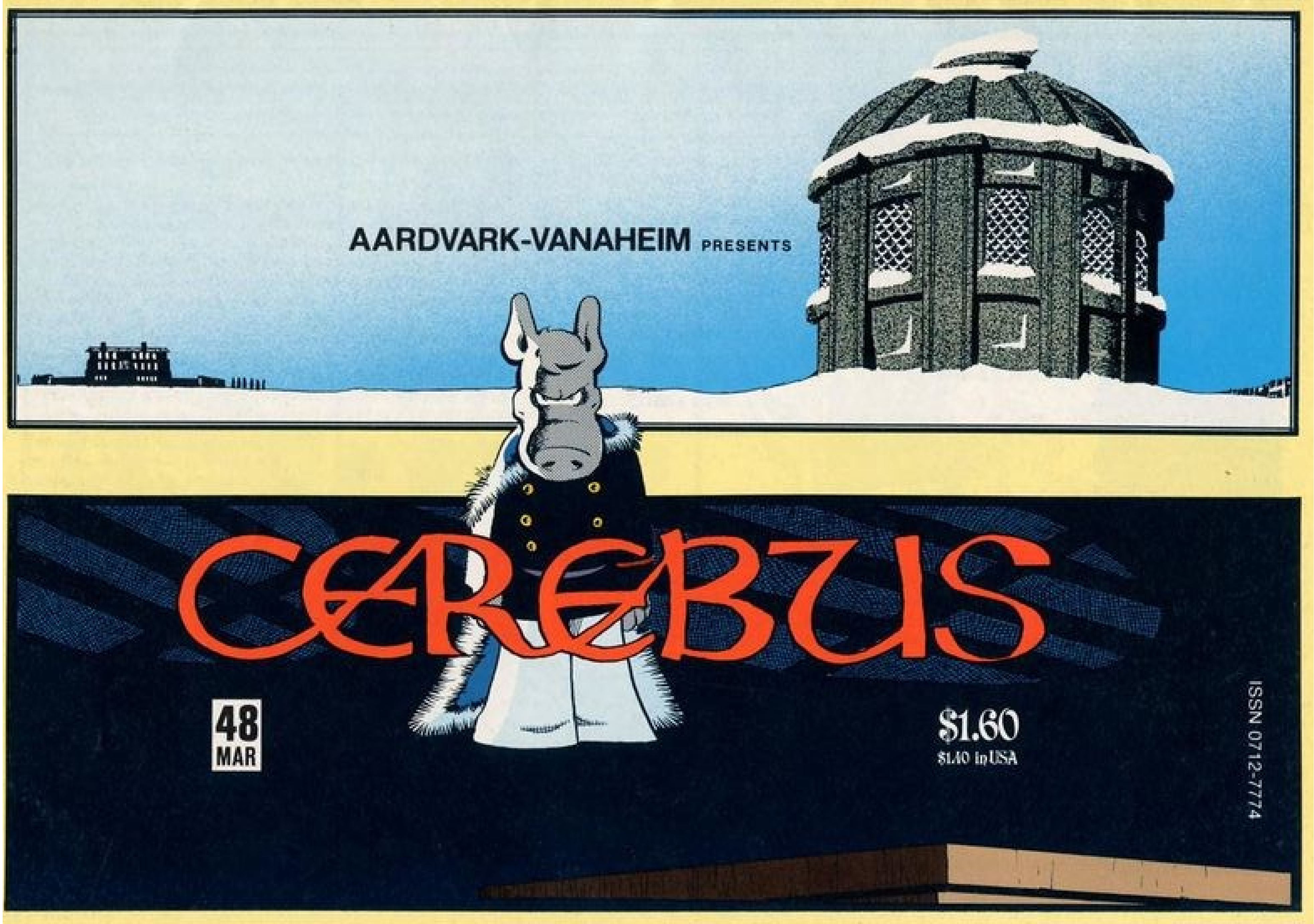


CEREBUS
THE AARDVARK

THE COLOUR PORTFOLIO

"COMING THIS SPRING"

45 PLATES **10 DOLLARS**


AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS
CEREBUS
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$1.60
$1.40 in USA
ISSN 0712-7774

A Note from the Publisher

This issue I would like to let you in on a little secret. The secret is this - there is a Cerebus Fan Club, and it's alive and kicking!!!!

Now - There are probably about 200 of you for whom this is not news. But considering the fact that there are **at least** another 1,200 people who aren't members, I figure I should let them in on this.

Now - if your objection is that you've heard all kinds of nasty rumors about there being no newsletter since last May, that was no rumor. But there have been a few changes the last month. The major one is that I have taken over running the fan club. So, those people who are members already, have received their personally autographed posters of our 1982 US Tour as a thank-you for being so patient. The newsletter (# 6) will feature some glimpses at the evolution of Astoria in a new regular feature that will showcase pages from Dave's notebook (which he uses to write the issues). We will continue to feature art and articles by fans, as well as including as many pieces from Dave as we can. We should be able to do more, as it is being put together here in Kitchener.

For those of you who want more of Cerebus than just the comic-I have the following announcement to make: The official Cerebus buttons are now available. These buttons were made directly from artwork that Dave provided. There are five different designs, 2 of Cerebus and one each of Elrod, the McGrew Bros and Moon Roach. They are 75¢ (US) each or $3.00 for the set. In Canada they are 95¢ each or $3.70 per set. You can get them from Comix and Books Unlimited, 205B Mansfield Road, Nottingham, England, NG1 3FS. The last time I heard from them, they were hoping to wholesale to Bud Plant in California, so maybe you can try ordering from them (address in black box).

See you next issue!

Deni

CONVENTIONS

COMIX FAIR

July 29, 30, 31, 1983
Houston, Texas

ALL-STAR CONVENTION

April 9 - 10, 1983
Rochester, New York •
(Dave will be doing a Moon Roach story with Dill Sienkiewicz at this Con)

MAPLECON S

July 15, 16, 17, 1983
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

SUBSCRIPTIONS

As of now, Aardvark-Vanaheim will be handling subscriptions and single issue orders on all Aardvark-Vanaheim books.

One year subscription of Cerebus $25.00 U.S./$22.00 Cdn., includes postage & handling. More information next issue.

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CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 48 MARCH 1983

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Karen McKiel

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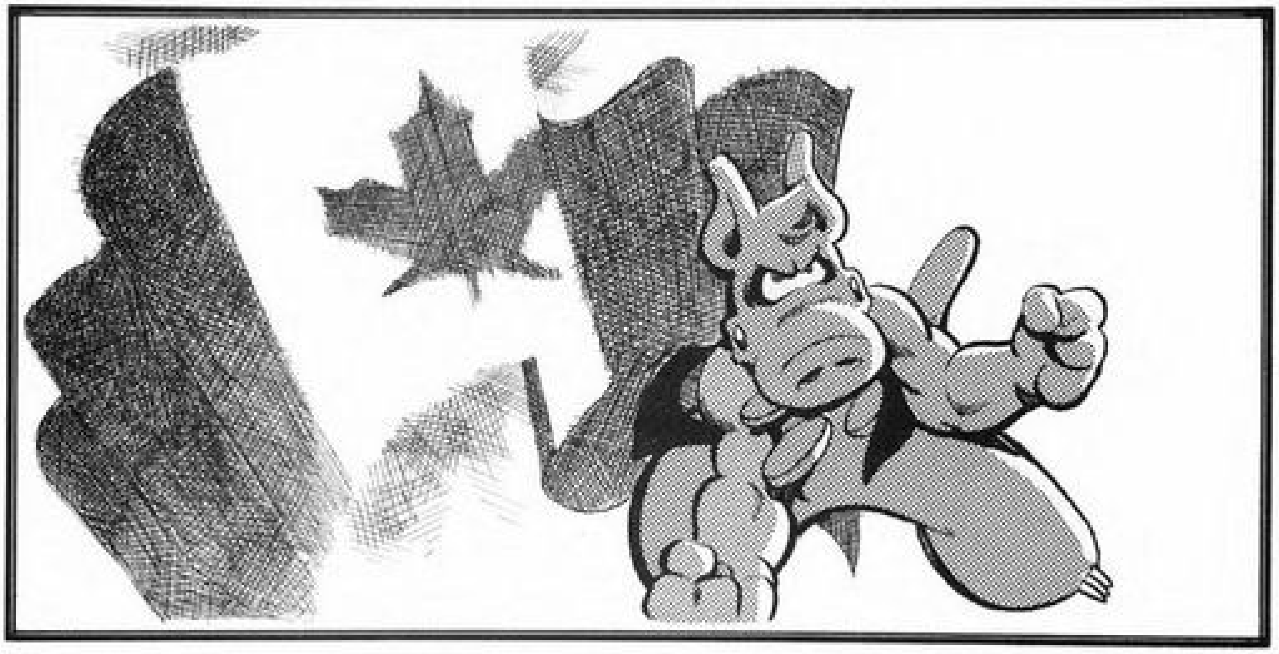
Swords of Cerebus, Volumes 1-4
Cerebus...#'s 32, 33, 37, 38, 40, 43, 45, 46, 47 & 48



FIRST CANADIAN TOUR JULY 1983

July 1 - Victoria, B.C.
"Island Fantasy"
#45 Market Square

July 2 - Vancouver, B.C.
"The Comic Shop"
2089 W. 4th Avenue

July 4 - Edmonton, Alta.
"Dark Star"
8123 104th Street

July 5 - Calgary, Alta.
"The Comic Centre"
111 Centre St. NW

July 5 - Calgary, Alta.
"Another Dimension"
330 10th Street NW.

July 6 - Calgary, Alta.
"Dreamland Comics"
1106 Memorial Dr. NW.

July 7 - Winnipeg, Man.
"Styx Comics"
1858 Arlington Street

July 8 - Winnipeg, Man.
"Comic World"
389 Portage Avenue

July 9 - Toronto, Ont.
"Silver Snail"
367 Queen St. W.

July 12 - Hamilton, Ont.
"Silver Snail"
Hamilton, Ont.

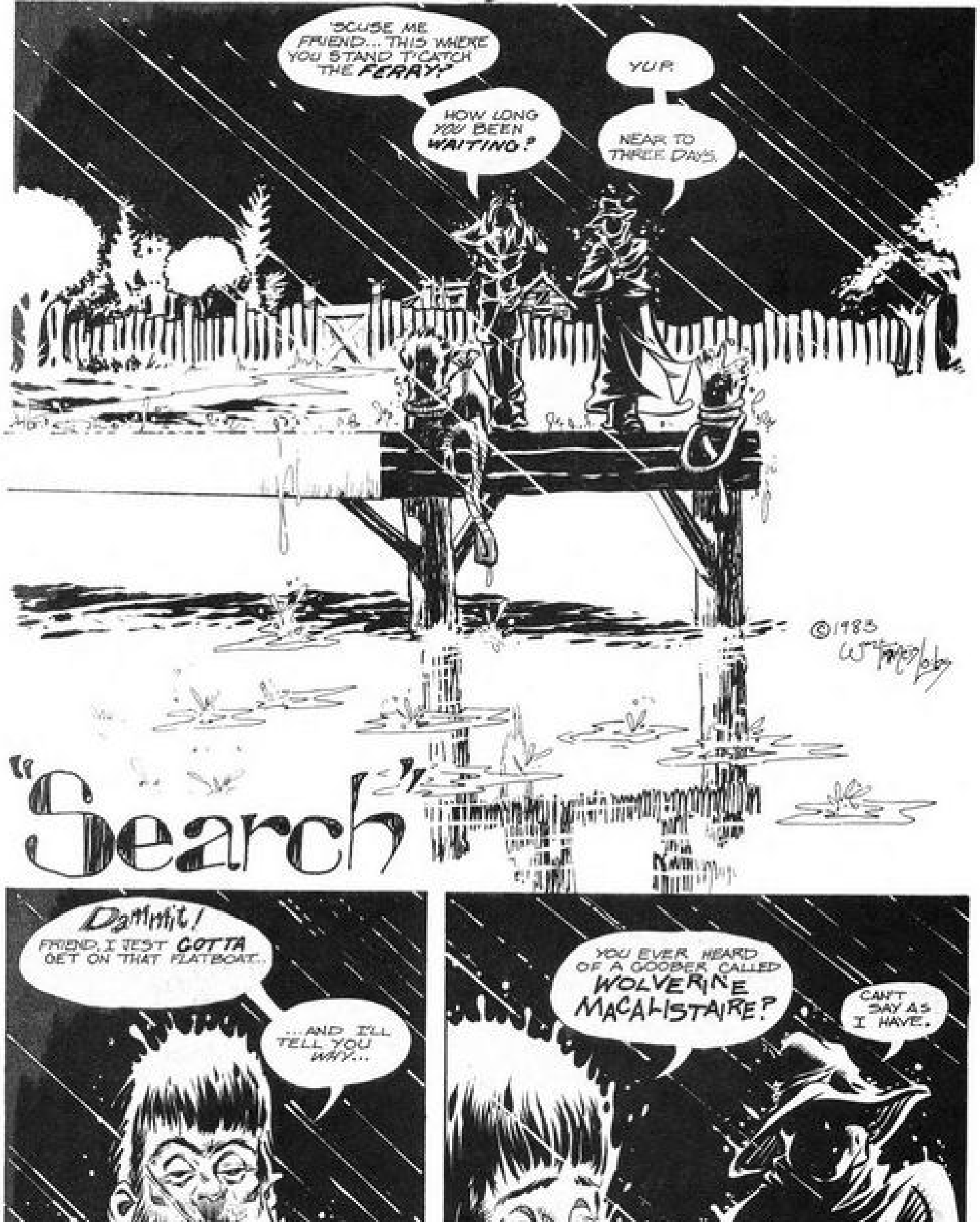
July 13 - Halifax, N.S.
"Odyssey 2000"
1598 Barrington St.

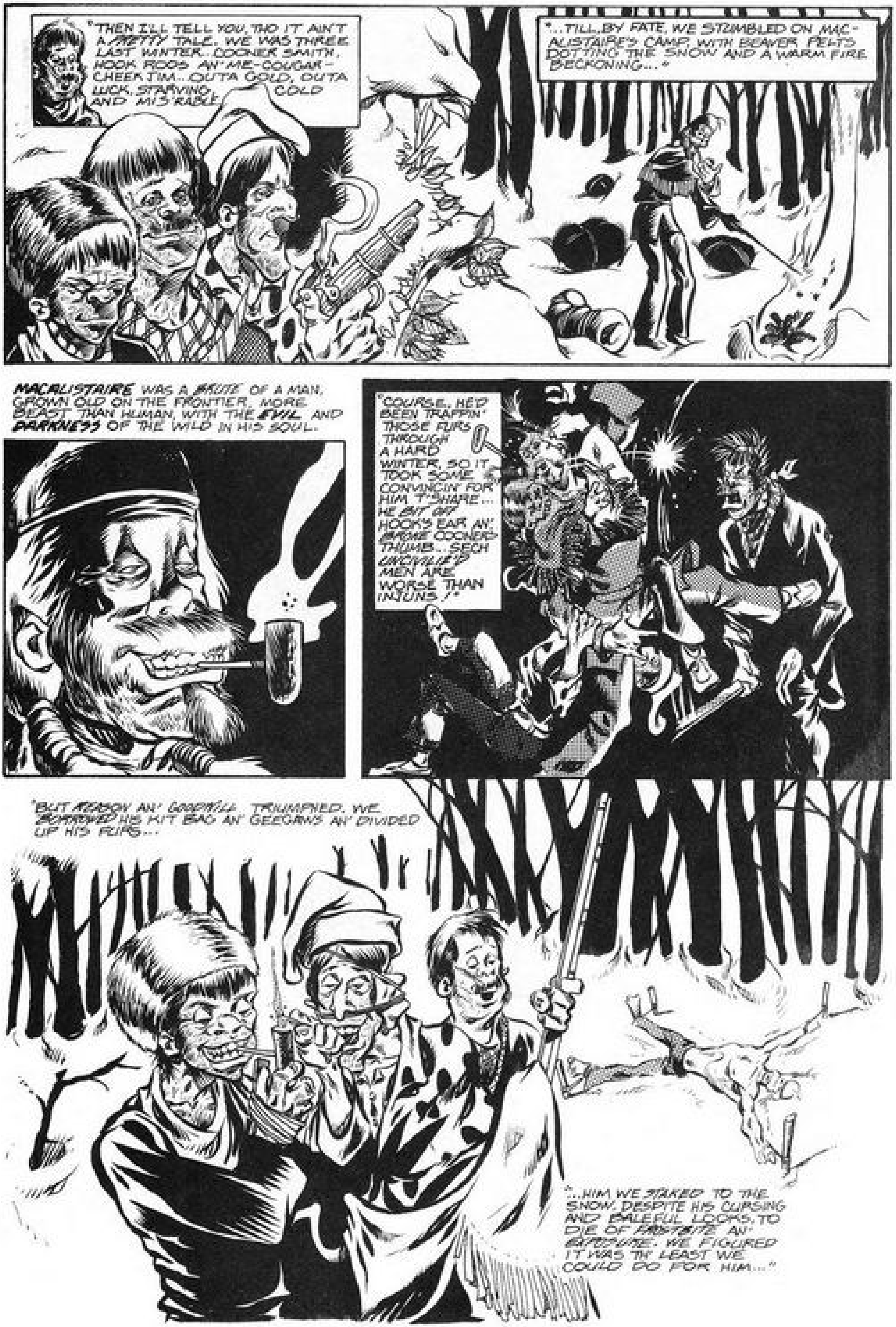
July 14 - Montreal, P.Q.
"Captain Quebec"
5108 Decarie

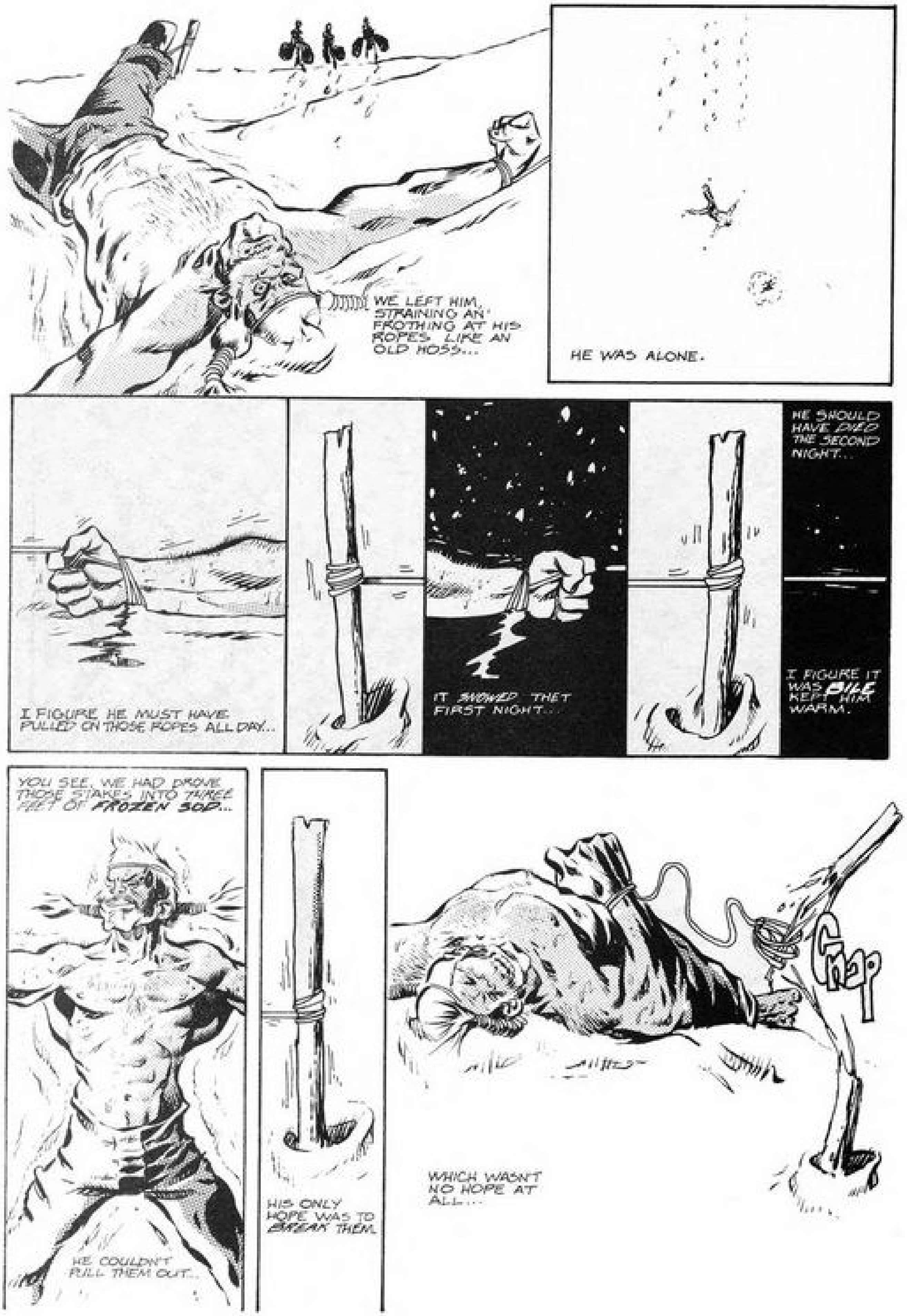
July 15 - Ottawa, Ont.
"Collectors Stop"
373 Richmond Road

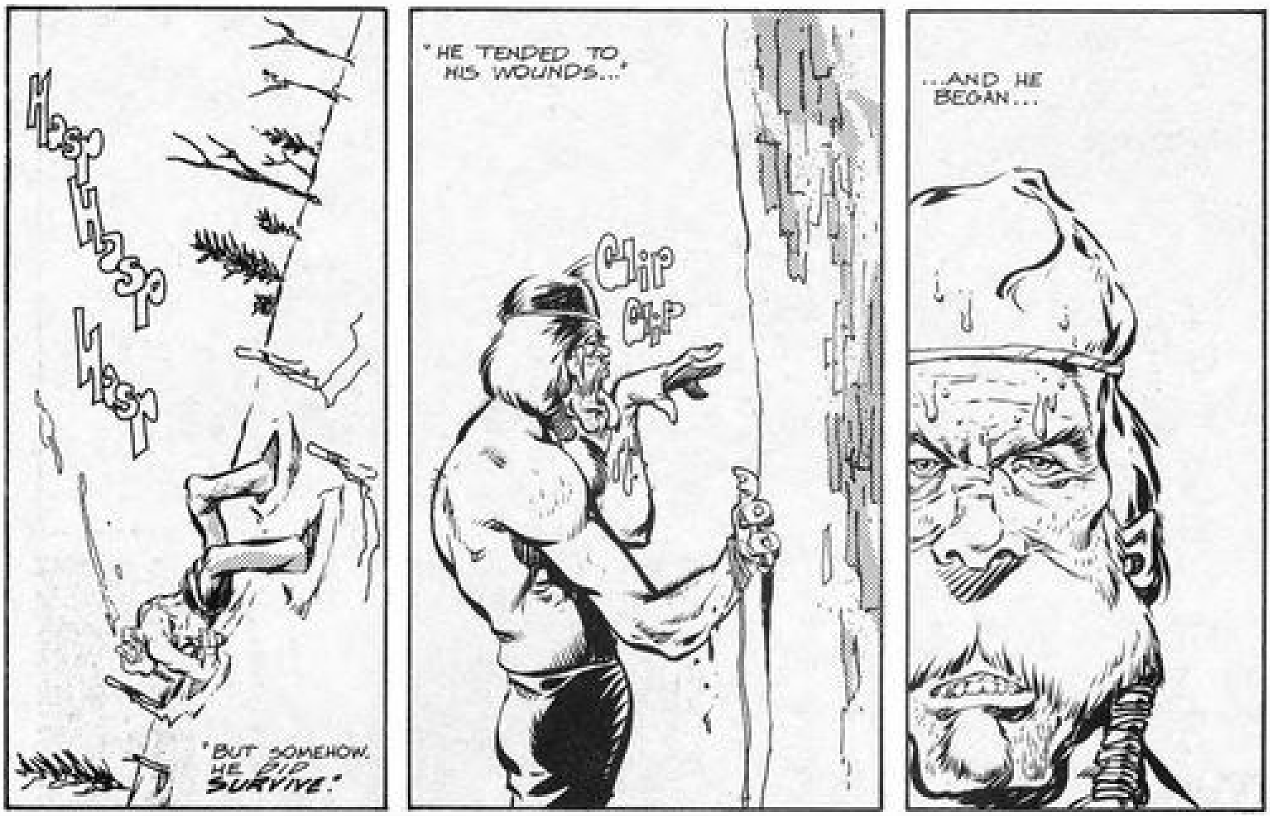
July 16 & 17 - Ottawa, Ont.
"MapleCon 5"
Carleton University

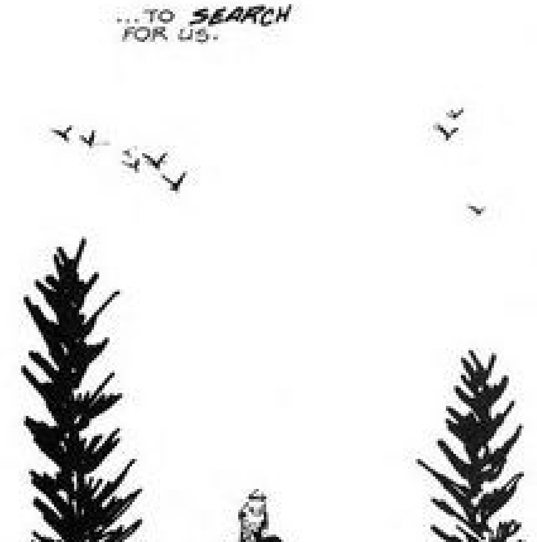
A UNIQUE STORY

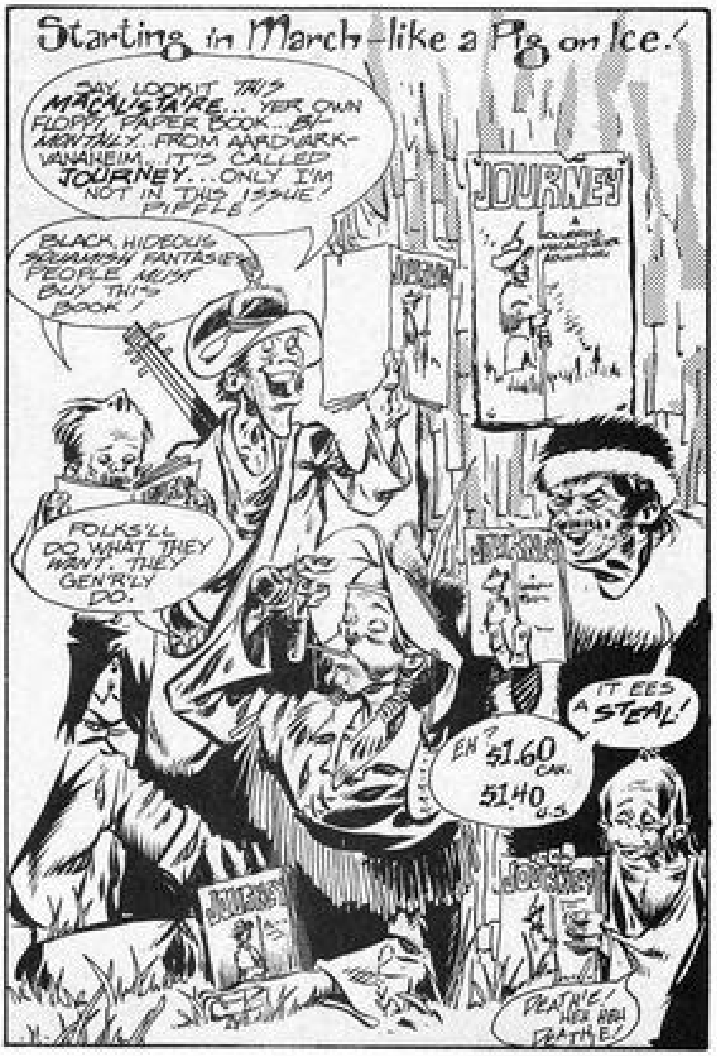

'SCUSE ME FRIEND... THIS WHERE YOU STAND T'CATCH THE *FERRY?*
YUP.
HOW LONG YOU BEEN *WAITING?*
NEAR TO THREE DAYS.
©1983
"Search"
DAMMIT! FRIEND, I JEST **GOTTA** GET ON THAT FLATBOAT...
...AND I'LL TELL YOU *WHY...*
YOU EVER HEARD OF A GOOBER CALLED **WOLVERINE MACALISTAIRE?**
CAN'T SAY AS I HAVE.


"THEN I'LL TELL YOU, THO IT AIN'T A PRETTY TALE. WE WAS THREE LAST WINTER...COONER SMITH, HOOK ROOS AN' ME-COUGAR-CHEEK JIM...OUTA GOLD, OUTA LUCK, STARVING, COLD AND MIS'RABLE...
"...TILL, BY FATE, WE STUMBLED ON MAC-ALISTAIRE'S CAMP, WITH BEAVER PELTS DOTTING THE SNOW AND A WARM FIRE BECKONING..."
MACALISTAIRE WAS A BRUTE OF A MAN, GROWN OLD ON THE FRONTIER, MORE BEAST THAN HUMAN, WITH THE EVIL AND DARKNESS OF THE WILD IN HIS SOUL.
"COURSE, HE'D BEEN TRAPPIN' THOSE FURS THROUGH A HARD WINTER, SO IT TOOK SOME CONVINCIN' FOR HIM T' SHARE... HE BIT OFF HOOK'S EAR AN' BROKE COONER'S THUMB... SECH UNCIVILIZED MEN ARE WORSE THAN INJUNS!"
"BUT REASON AN' GOODWILL TRIUMPHED. WE BORROWED HIS KIT BAG AN' GEEGAWS AN' DIVIDED UP HIS FURS...
"...HIM WE STAKED TO THE SNOW, DESPITE HIS CURSING AND BALEFUL LOOKS, TO DIE OF FROSTBITE AN' EXPOSURE. WE FIGURED IT WAS TH' LEAST WE COULD DO FOR HIM..."


WE LEFT HIM, STRAINING AN' FROTHING AT HIS ROPES LIKE AN OLD HOSS...
HE WAS ALONE.
I FIGURE HE MUST HAVE PULLED ON THOSE ROPES ALL DAY...
IT SNOWED THET FIRST NIGHT...
HE SHOULD HAVE DIED THE SECOND NIGHT...
I FIGURE IT WAS BILE KEPT HIM WARM.
YOU SEE, WE HAD DROVE THOSE STAKES INTO THREE FEET OF FROZEN SOD...
HE COULDN'T PULL THEM OUT...
HIS ONLY HOPE WAS TO BREAK THEM.
Crnap
WHICH WASN'T NO HOPE AT ALL...


Hasp Hasp Hasp
Hisp
"BUT SOMEHOW, HE DID SURVIVE."
"HE TENDED TO HIS WOUNDS..."
Clip Clip
...AND HE BEGAN...


...TO SEARCH FOR US.
to be continued next issue


Starting in March - like a Pig on Ice!
SAY, LOOKIT THIS MACALISTAIRE... YER OWN FLOPPY PAPER BOOK.. BI-MONTHLY.. FROM AARDVARK-VANAHEIM...IT'S CALLED JOURNEY...ONLY I'M NOT IN THIS ISSUE! PIFFLE!
BLACK, HIDEOUS, SQUAMISH FANTASIES! PEOPLE MUST BUY THIS BOOK!
JOURNEY
FOLKS'LL DO WHAT THEY WANT. THEY GEN'R'LY DO.
IT EES A STEAL!
EH? $1.60 CAN. $1.40 U.S.
DEATH! HEH HEH DEATH!

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C'
KITCHENER, ONTARIO
N2G 4R2

Dear Dave and Deni -

After well over 10,000 comics read, I tend to be very choosy these days. **Cerebus** is far and away my favorite book.

When I become fond of something, I usually pick up everything I can find related to it. Like in the case of recording artists, I'll pick up promotional records and posters. The same applies to Cerebus. And you've been very obliging, by providing me with lots of additional things to collect. Posters, portfolios, stuffed toys, original art, fan club material, game cards, etc. I can't get enough of this stuff. I'm looking forward to the color portfolio and the "Cerebus Companion" book.

I'd like to suggest a couple of other items you might consider. One is a Cerebus Big-Little-Book. No doubt you've seen Toe Wehrle's **Cauliflower Catnip** book. I'd love to see Cerebus in one. Maybe **Neil the Horse** would be even a better choice for one.

Second is a set of rubber stamps featuring characters from **Cerebus**. A lot of the Underground artists have had stamps made of their characters. Anyway, Rubber Stamps are a lot of fun and will get Cerebus' image all over the place.

Give it some thought. Since you handle the printing of the book and most printers also handle rubber stamps as a business sideline, you can check it out first hand.

Best,

Charles Lawrence
Box 27,
FALKLAND, NC., 27827

We are trying to be very careful about what merchandise we put on the market and to be quite honest, I'm not crazy about doing either rubber stamps or a Big Little Book. Please try to remember that while there are a number of fans like yourself who "Can't get enough of this stuff", a large part of Cerebus' readership is made up of "Nuke E.T." people .... largely because of the crass exploitation that such "products" represent to them. We are also leaning towards more adult themes in our limited merchandising where possible. We're considering Cerebus beer steins for later this year, as an example. Anyone wishing to propose Cerebus "goodies" please feel free, but be forewarned that I do not see the "goodies" as a major part of our operation.

Dear Deni and Dave,

Well, it most certainly took me long enough to finally catch on to CEREBUS. Honestly, with so very much good work being put forth from independent publishers these days, I didn't start buying and reading CEREBUS until #23. **Now** I'm a 'hooked' fan and have pestered my local specialty shop to death for back issues, a deck of DEALER'S DIAMONDBACK, and the SWORDS collections!

Aside from the stories and art I most like the fan and pro pictures you publish from time to time and would like to thank you for printing a recent shot of Barry Smith (since he's one of my all time favorite artists). I'd like to see many more photos as time goes by. Was your art style infulenced quite a bit by the late Vaughn Bode? I've noticed similiar drawing structure in the wide legs and pearshaped body on CEREBUS, that I use on my own cartoon-type characters and I know that Bode's lizard drawings were the main cause for it.

Continuous luck with CEREBUS,

Sincerely

David Puckett
P.O. Box 239,
Cave City, Kentucky, 42127

It seems odd to me that after five years of doing Cerebus it is only in the last few months that I've been asked (almost constantly) if Bode was a major influence on my work. I met Vaughn Bode briefly at a Toronto Cosmicon in the mid-1970's and asked if he would be willing to do an interview. He declined, which is just as well since I had only a handful of tedious "fan-boy" questions prepared, like "How did you come up with Cheech Wizard?" I did see a performance of his "Cartoon Concert" at that con. Aside from being disappointed that Cheech's voice was that of W.C. Fields (I had pictured it as Leo Gorcey) I was very very impressed. When I discovered in later years that all of his stories took place on a planet he had conceived down to very minute detail I was even more impressed. As the first person to plan his fictitious cartoon world so thoroughly, he is, indeed a major influence. On the drawing side, no. I knew a lot of guys who went through a phase of swiping Bode's drawing style, but it was his writing that influenced me far more. I consider his underground "The Man" a hands down classic.

Dear Dave,

You know what I'd like to see? I'd like to see Commander Krull pass through, still dictating his memoirs, and get into a conversation with the Moon Roach, still having Kevitch narrating his adventures. I can just see Cerebus's expression as his face disappears behind a cloud of word balloons.

Lord Julius's nemesis has finally appeared in the person of Duke Leonardi. Classically, the Chico character was one of only two people in the world who could get the better of the Groucho character, simply by being so stupid that not even Groucho's verbal manipulations could alter his mind-set. Once he gets an idea, there is no shifting it. Remember this: "You got a brother? No? How 'bout a sister? Well, you better come with us, then. Your sister, she's a very sick man."?

I can hardly wait until Adolphus, the mute wizard or godling, shows up. He'd have to be one or the other in order to do such things as pull anything from his pockets on demand (such as a steaming cup of coffee and the candle already lit and burning at both ends in **Horse Feathers**). When Adolphus and Leonardi get together, Lord Julius can kiss his plans goodbye. Anyone else, he could handle, but those two......

(There might also be some possible motivation for Adolphus wanting to put a stop to Lord Julius' doings. As I understand it, Lord Julius introduced the idea of using a massive, chaotic bureaucracy and massive national debts as a political tool. This is responsible for the changes in everyday life that were referred to in Cerebus #11 by the Roach's former secret identity. These changes, in turn, are making magic less and less favored, since it's "bad business." So carefree and magical a being as the Harpo character could hardly be expected to ignore such goings-on.)

Of course, when all three are confronted with the kind of stuffy narrow-mindedness that usually pervades upper-crust society, they wind up on the same side, more or less. Incidentally, have you noticed how much Bran Mac Muffin looks like Zeppo Marx?

And of course, I haven't forgotten that tarot reading we overheard in #20, about Cerebus being a random factor with immense disruptive capabilities. He seems to be fulfilling that description here.

And finally, what's with Astoria? She doesn't seem to mind any of the radical things Cerebus has done. Don't they interfere with her plans even one little bit? And what about her

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C'
KITCHENER, ONTARIO
N2G 4R2

connections to the Eye in the Pyramid? Is she one of them, a double agent, a free agent, a closet Cirinist, a Discordian, or what-all? I don't expect answers to all of these right away, but I would like to know a bit more of **why** she is helping Cerebus to do whatever he wants (and don't give us that "it furthers her own plans" runaround; we already **know** that. I want to know **how**). Who knows? Maybe, in issue #300, it will turn out that she is really an avatar of the goddess Discordia, and has also appeared to him in the guise of the Regency Elf and other characters we haven't met yet in order to guide him through various areas of society that needed disrupting. (Now just watch, people -- ten bucks says he won't even give me credit.)

Hoping this finds you in time for Knight St. Rupert's Visiting Day, I am,

John S. Olson
806 W. University Pkwy.,
Baltimore, Md.

Adolphus? Adolph was the boys' father, John. Harpo's real name was Arthur. You were the first one to notice that Bran's High Society look was intended to look like Zeppo though. Two points.

It would be very difficult to explain what Astoria is up to and why she is doing what she is doing because it is the result of three major opposing forces that have not been addressed properly. Suffice to say, things are not going completely her way (although it looks like it sometimes). There is a lot of action behind the scenes, causing major figures to act, react, and act on the reaction.

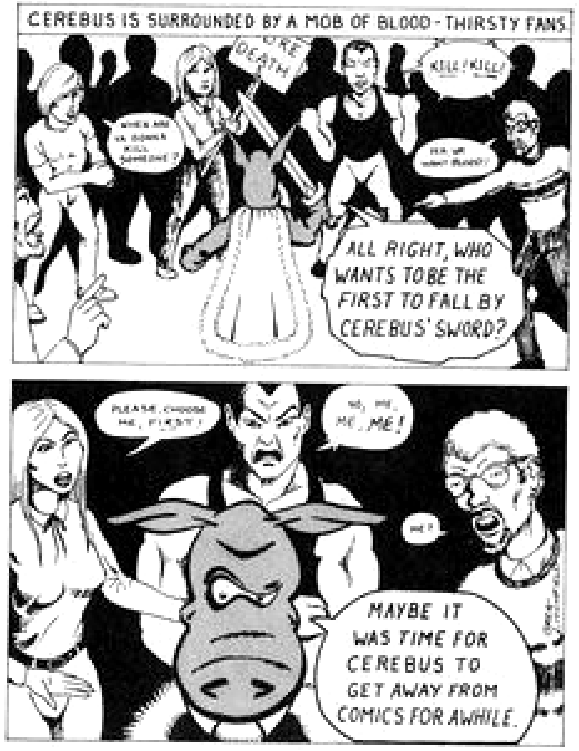
Believe me, if it turns out she's an avatar of the goddess Discordia, I'll run your name in 72 pt. Baskerville Old-face on that issue's cover.

Dear Dave and Deni,

It really gets my goat (no relation to Lord Julius') when people write in to you and ask when Cerebus is going to get away from this Prime Minister business, and go back to killing people for a living. I find it especially distressing when you consider all the fatalities in current Marvel and DC fare. I decided to direct some of my displeasure in a more positive direction, and I came up with the enclosed drawing.

Respectfully,

Greg Litchfield
132 Boston Ave. #I,
W. Somerville, Ma., 02144


CEREBUS IS SURROUNDED BY A MOB OF BLOOD - THIRSTY FANS
DEATH
WHEN ARE YA GONNA KILL SOMEONE?
KILL! KILL!
YEAH, WE WANT BLOOD!!
ALL RIGHT, WHO WANTS TO BE THE FIRST TO FALL BY CEREBUS' SWORD?
PLEASE, CHOOSE ME, FIRST!
ME, ME, ME, ME!
ME?
MAYBE IT WAS TIME FOR CEREBUS TO GET AWAY FROM COMICS FOR AWHILE.

I recognized all the people in your cartoon Greg. There was at least one in every shop on the tour...two in Palo Alto. To be quite serious. I think it can all be chalked up to bruised sensibilities. These people are so shell-shocked by the entertainment they choose that they are unable to recognize dramatic tension in anything short of imminent or actual death. After a while that isn't enough and they need singularly slow & lingering/agonizing/gory/death to feel satisfied. Then they need mass death (the hero who kills a dozen "villians" in the space of three pages). I've refrained from addressing this issue for a while, but enough is enough. Cerebus never did kill that much in the pre-High Society stories. He will not be killing that ***much after High Society. If you want that stuff, you know where*** *you can find it.... in full glorious colour on slick paper. If you want to be* **here** *with the grown-ups, you're going to have to learn to use a knife and fork, sit up straight and stop drooling.*

Dearest Dave:

I have followed the mighty earth pig from inception. Ahh for those days when cold steel, quick wit and, a touch of magic linked Cerebus to some part of primal man's Id. Now, Pshaw... Pshaw; Bureaucracy, wordy discourses and, paper anarchists abound.Through it all one point states itself. Cerebus the Aardvark, master of swords, champion of uncharted destiny; is still a pig in politics. So how exciting is victory over a goat.

Dave, Cerebus' appeal was at its zenith when he was characterized by a shrewd, solid, baseness that made every action and reaction real.

Possibly all this ethereal postulating spawns tedium for others as well. In any case I've renewed my subscription and, wait with anticipation for a well handled blade or definitive slash.

Sworn to Cerebus
Sworn to Fate
Sworn to the Creator

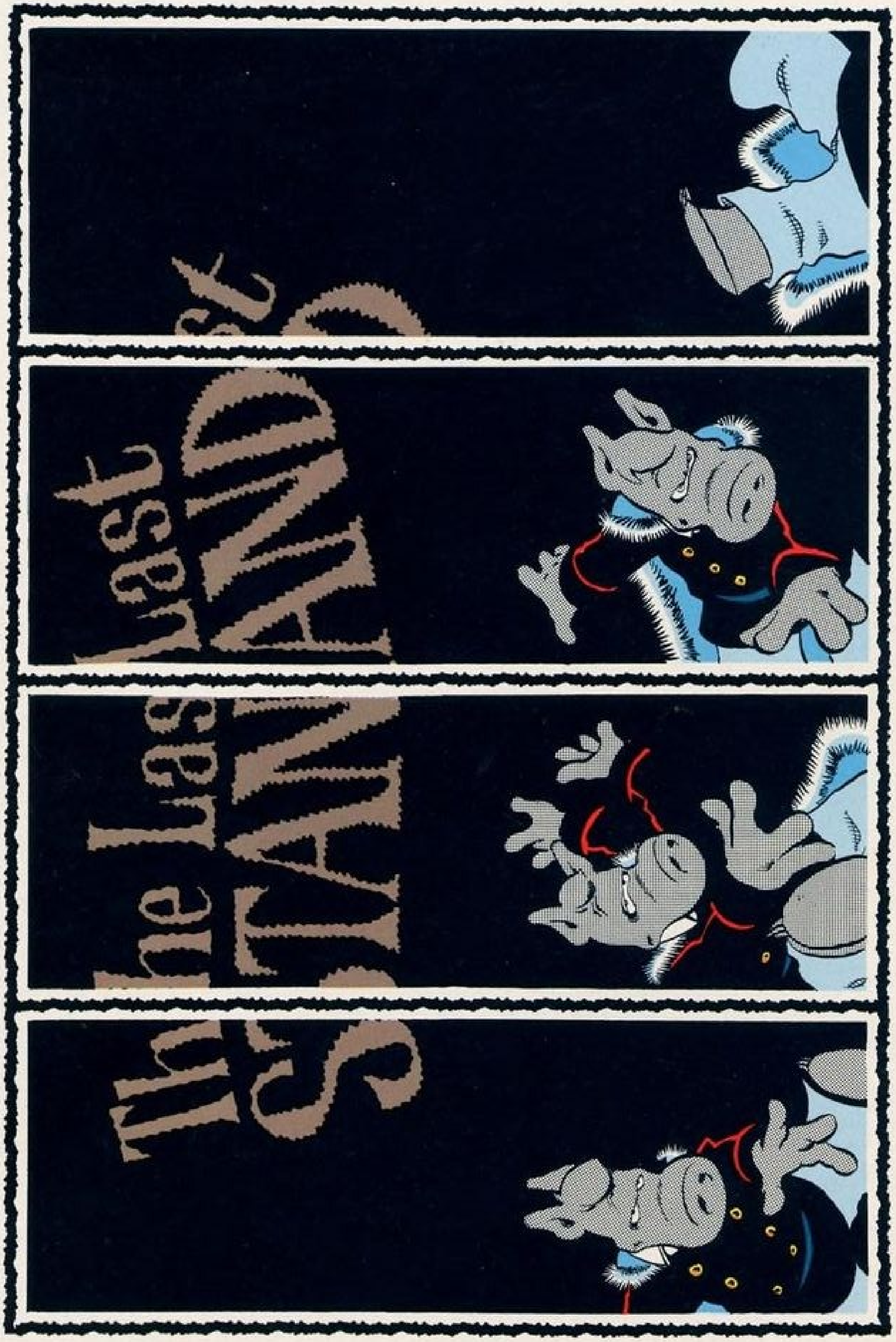
Richard Flanagan
P.O. Box 404,
Bayonne, N.J., 07002

I'm not sure, but I think this means he wants Cerebus to start shaving.

ISSN 0712-7774

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS


The Last Stand
The Last Stand
The Last Stand

49
APR

$1.60
$1.40 in USA

A Note from the Publisher

Here we are at issue #49! It's the final countdown on High Society, and I'm beginning to feel some tension about the issues following #50. When Dave began doing High Society, I wasn't too sure if I would like Cerebus in a political story. Now it seems the shoe is on the other foot and I don't know what to think about reading Cerebus without all the political strategies and power struggles. I suppose that any change does take some getting use to.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the folks who sent in their letters of encouragement to Karen and I when we started up the Cerebus Fan Club. The mail has been just fantastic, and if we had any doubts about taking the fan club over, we know now that it has all been worth the work. The first newsletter (#6) has gone out and we are quite happy with the results. We already have some of the next newsletter organized, and hope to see some more art and articles before number eight goes out in August.

This next month or two is going to be a busy one for Dave and I. There are quite a few personal appearances scheduled (see letters column for places and dates) and we are hoping it will give us a chance to talk to our fans south of the 49th parallel. We have a Canadian Tour scheduled for July 1983 and a European Tour for April 1984, so it may be 1985 before we do a US Tour again. Therefore, weekend appearances seem to be the best way of getting around. I hope I will be seeing many of you over the next few months, and have a chance to talk to you about both Cerebus and alternative comics in general.

Until that time, this page will have to suffice (along with the daily mail).

I'll see you again next month.

Deni

CEREBUS FAN CLUB

MEMBERSHIP FEE
$8.00 a year

New mailing address:

CEREBUS FAN CLUB
Box 1674, Station "C"
Kitchener, Ontario
N2G 4R2

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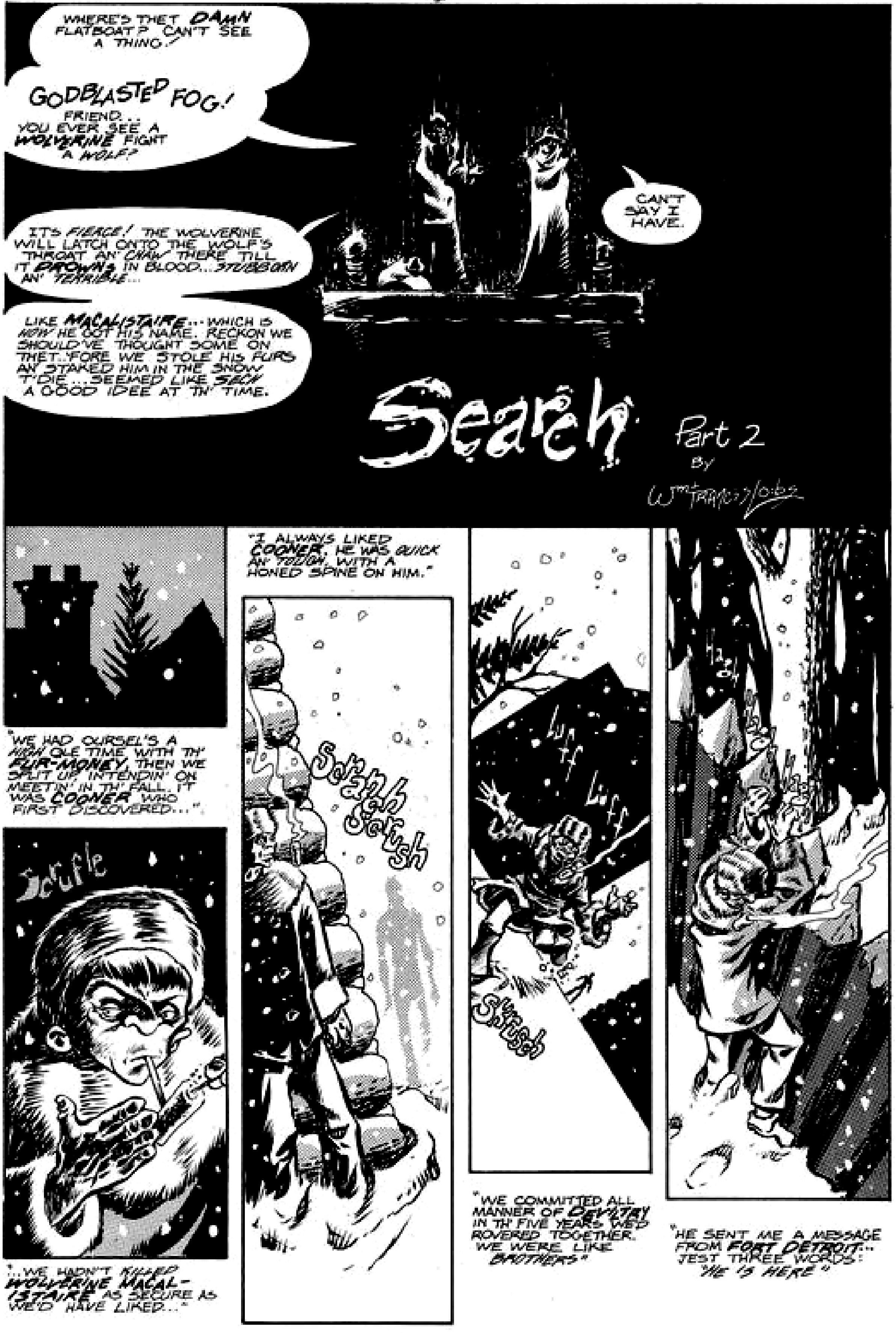
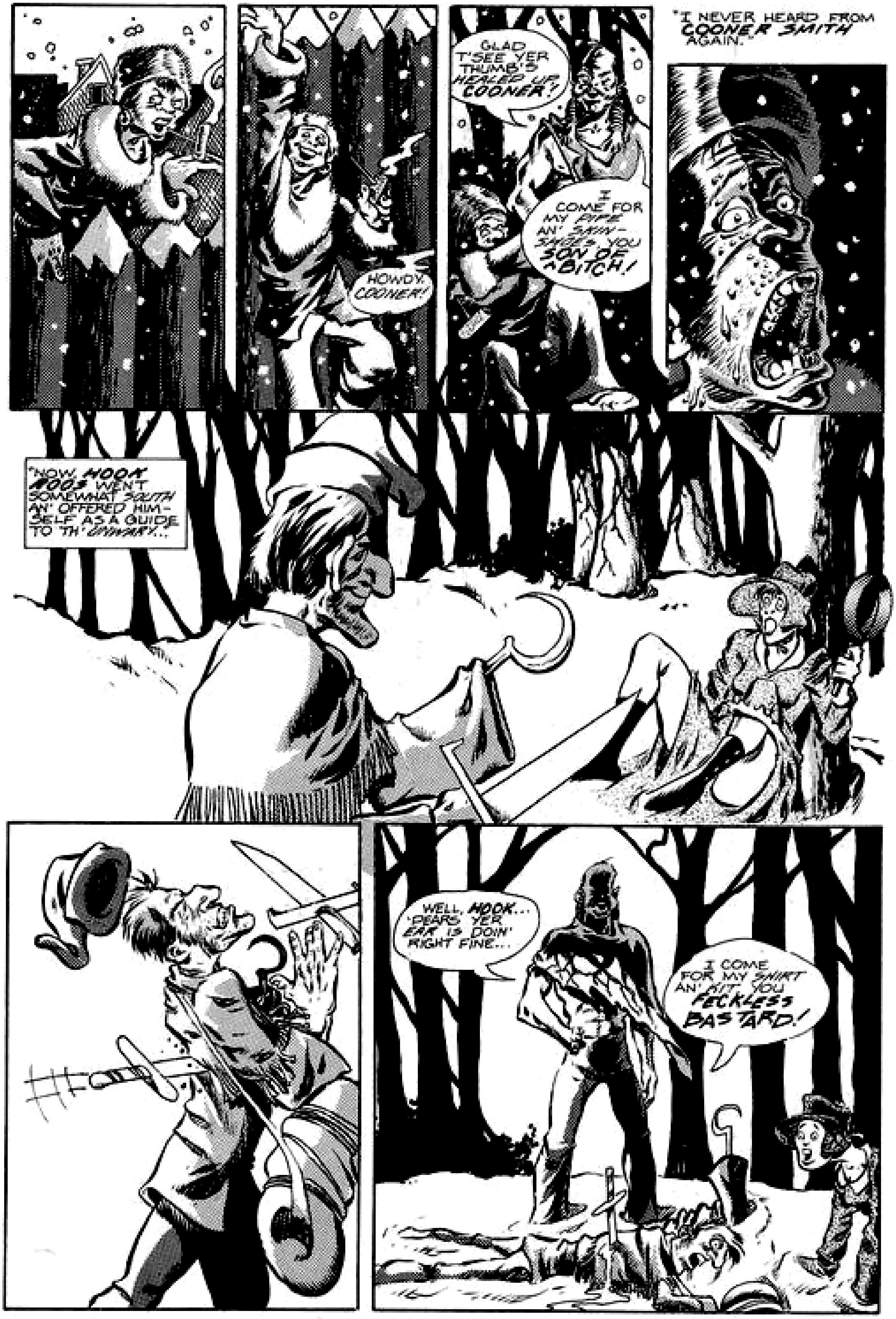
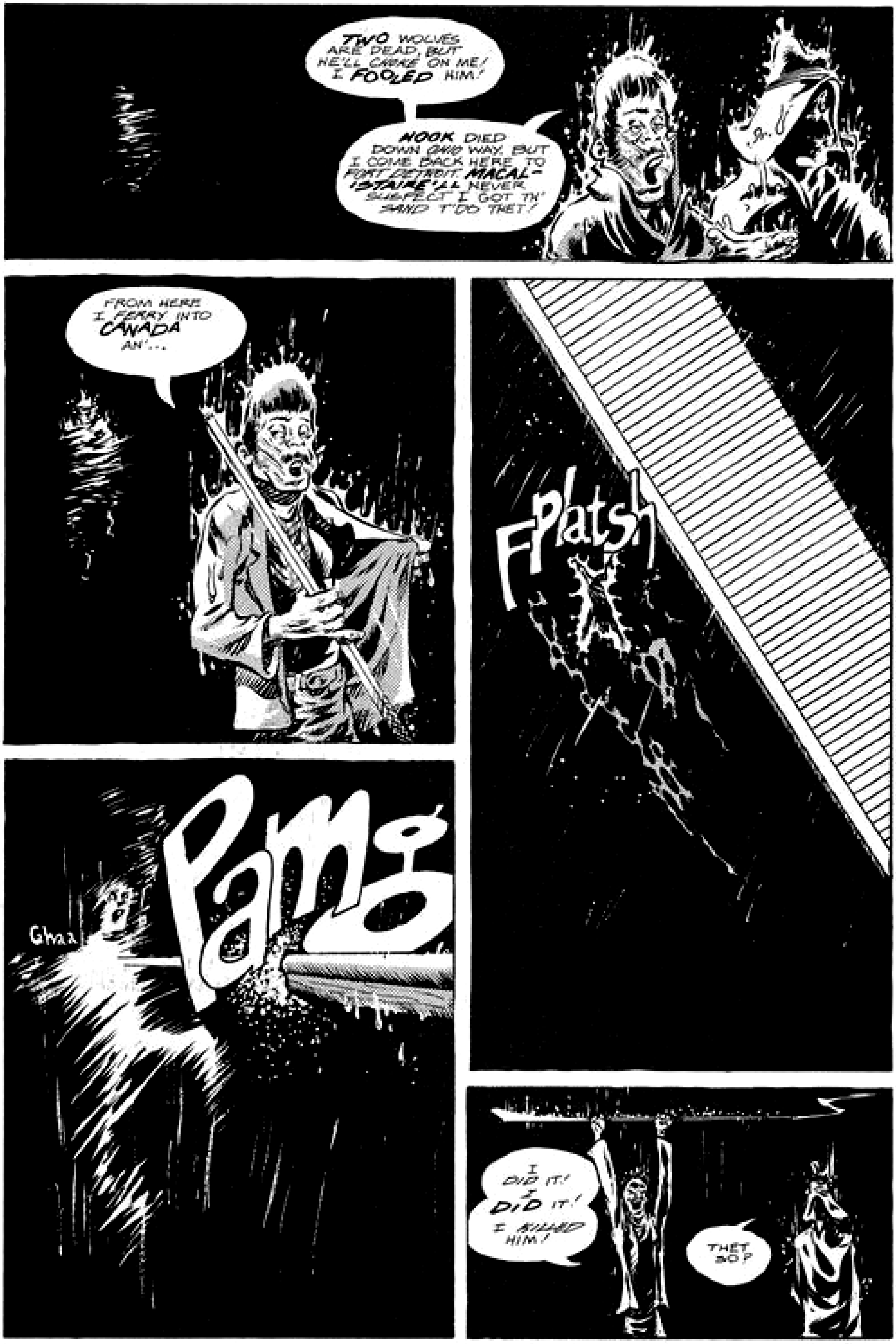
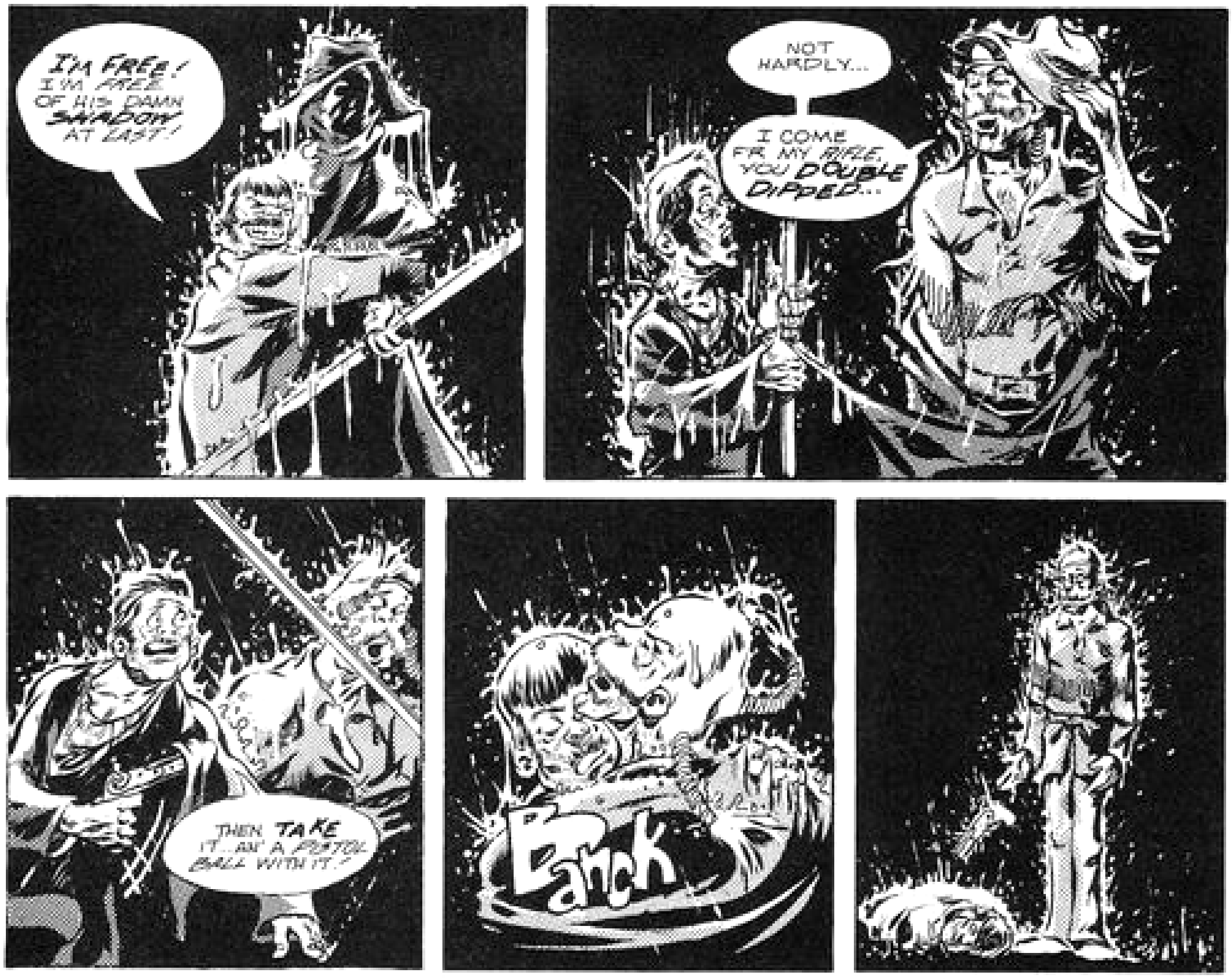
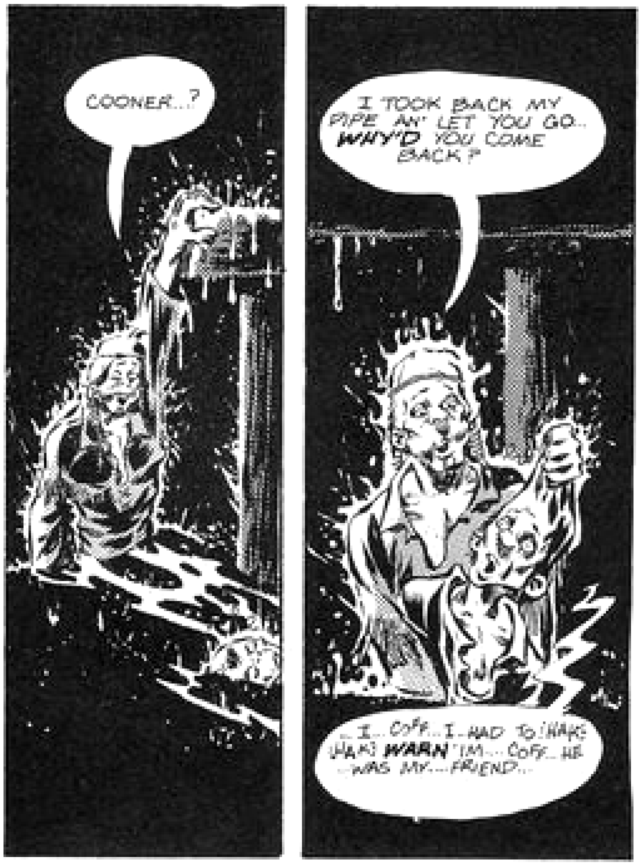
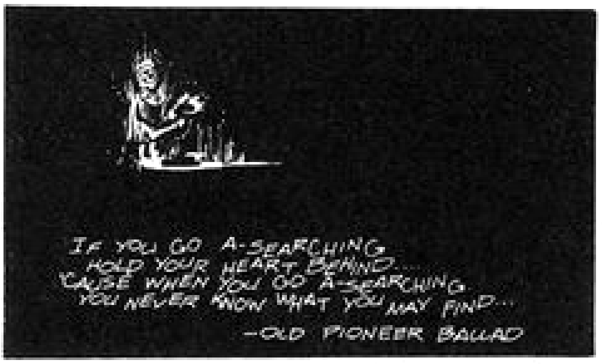

WHERE'S THET DAMN FLATBOAT? CAN'T SEE A THING.!
GODBLASTED FOG! FRIEND.. YOU EVER SEE A WOLVERINE FIGHT A WOLF?
CAN'T SAY I HAVE.
ITS FIERCE! THE WOLVERINE WILL LATCH ONTO THE WOLF'S THROAT AN' CHAW THERE TILL IT DROWNS IN BLOOD...STUBBORN AN' TERRIBLE...
LIKE MACALISTAIRE...WHICH IS HOW HE GOT HIS NAME. RECKON WE SHOULD'VE THOUGHT SOME ON THET..FORE WE STOLE HIS FURS AN' STAKED HIM IN THE SNOW T'DIE...SEEMED LIKE SECH A GOOD IDEE AT TH' TIME.
Search Part 2
By
Wm Tracy Jobs
"WE HAD OURSEL'S A HIGH OLE TIME WITH TH' FUR-MONEY, THEN WE SPLIT UP, INTENDIN' ON MEETIN' IN TH' FALL. IT WAS COONER WHO FIRST DISCOVERED..."
Scrufle
"...WE HADN'T KILLED WOLVERINE MACAL-ISTAIRE AS SECURE AS WE'D HAVE LIKED..."
"I ALWAYS LIKED COONER. HE WAS QUICK AN' TOUGH, WITH A HONED SPINE ON HIM."
Luff
Luff
"WE COMMITTED ALL MANNER OF DEVILTRY IN TH' FIVE YEARS WE'D ROVERED TOGETHER. WE WERE LIKE BROTHERS"
"HE SENT ME A MESSAGE FROM FORT DETROIT.. JEST THREE WORDS: "HE IS HERE""

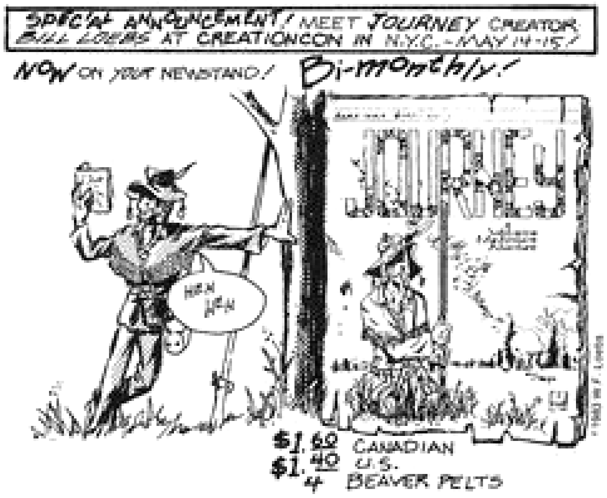

HOWDY, COONER!
GLAD T'SEE YER THUMB'S HEALED UP, COONER!
I COME FOR MY PIPE AN' SKIN-SHOES YOU SON OF A BITCH!
"I NEVER HEARD FROM COONER SMITH AGAIN."
"NOW, HOOK HOOS WENT SOMEWHAT SOUTH AN' OFFERED HIMSELF AS A GUIDE TO TH' UNWARY...
WELL, HOOK... 'PEARS YER EAR IS DOIN' RIGHT FINE...
I COME FOR MY SHIRT AN' KIT YOU FECKLESS BASTARD!


TWO WOLVES ARE DEAD, BUT HE'LL CATCH ON ME! I FOOLED HIM!
NOOK DIED DOWN OHIO WAY, BUT I COME BACK HERE TO FORT DETROIT. MACAL-ISTAIRE'LL NEVER SUSPECT I GOT TH' SAND T'DO THET!
FROM HERE I FERRY INTO CANADA AN'...
FPlatsh
Pam
Ghaa
I DID IT! I DID IT! I KILLED HIM!
THET SO?


I'M FREE! I'M FREE OF HIS DAMN SHADOW AT LAST!
NOT HARDLY...
I COME FR MY RIFLE, YOU DOUBLE DIPPED...
THEN TAKE IT... AN' A PISTOL BALL WITH IT.!
BANCK


COONER...?
I TOOK BACK MY PIPE AN' LET YOU GO... WHY'D YOU COME BACK?
...I... COFF... I... HAD TO! HAK! HAK! WARN 'IM... COFF... HE ...WAS MY... FRIEND...


IF YOU GO A-SEARCHING
HOLD YOUR HEART BEHIND...
'CAUSE WHEN YOU GO A-SEARCHING
YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU MAY FIND...
—OLD PIONEER BALLAD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AARDVARK COMMENT

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Dear Dave,

I've been reading (observing would be a better word) Cerebus for, oh, a couple of years now and have consistently watched a fairly funny comic degenerate into a comic starring an extremely ugly little character named Cerebus. His recent advance into power accompanied by a number of explicit facist political decisions are hardly funny in light of the real-life occurances in places such as Lebanon and El Salvador. In fact, your comic has absolutely **no** likeable characters! They are all greedy, stupid degenerates! Well, so much for Cerebus: I'm sure that Ronald Reagan would send arms and advisors to help out Cerebus in his time of need, that's the sort of character your aardvark has become.

Frank B. Gerheim
1398 St. Louis Avenue
Long Beach, CA. 90804

Explicitly fascist political decisions would pretty much sum up Cerebus the Prime Minister. I don't really understand your comparison to El Salvador and Lebanon, nor your attitude that such situations are not ripe for humorous treatment. On the subject of no likeable characters, I would take issue with you. I think Jaka and Regency Elf are very likeable and certainly don't qualify as greedy, stupid degenerates. I also think Ronald Reagan is going to have enough trouble getting re-elected without sending military aid and advisors to a cartoon character.

Dear Deni,

(In case you like to know who is writing to you, we sort of met in the East Colfax store of Mile High Comics during your stay in Denver on your US Tour. I had glasses, a mustache, two "Friends of Cerebus" stickers in a 2¼ inch button, and a brilliant, wrong but brilliant, explanation of exactly why that final vote for prime minister had not been voted).

I want to thank you very much for writing me (us) what has been happening to the Cerebus Fan Club. I had noticed that I hadn't received anything for a while, but was too cynical to write to complain. I've also recently been stiffed by three other magazines and in no case did it really seem worthwhile to check to see if I was really dealing with turnips. Anyway, I want to thank you for your courtesy and your explanation and am looking forward to receiving your mailings.

You might want to tell Dave, that as a result of trying to understand the economic situation in Cerebus, I have a better understanding of the international economic situation in the real world. (Real World? Tarim!) Also that I've just read Cerebus 47 and if I were in Cerebus' position, I'm not sure I would try to hold on until issue 50 - I'd cut and run now. Also, it bears out my initial impression of Bran Mak Mufin from issue 5: "paranoid schizophrenic with delusions of grandeur" or "crazy as a Panrovian monk." Take your choice.

Take care of yourself.

Yours truly,

Charlie Ehrenpreis
P.O. Box 18539
Denver, CO. 80218

Let's not forget, Charlie, that it was the "paranoid schizophrenic with delusions of grandeur" who first ventured the opinion that Cerebus should settle for nothing less than the Prime Minister's office, proving, perhaps that "delusions" are in the mind of the unbeliever (or something like that).

Dear Aardvarks:

I have just started buying Cerebus and my favorite character is Moon Roach. In issue 47 he was shown so much that I had to write and give you a few words of praise.

Now how about this:

1) Show a lot of Moon Roach every issue!
2) Give Moon Roach his own comic!

Thanks for reading this and please ...... more Moon Roach!

Adam Gerle
4206 112 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada

1) All I've shown of Moon roach in the last while is the bottom half of his face. If demand warrants I might consider showing part of this neck.
2) We did give him his own comic - a copy of Detective#27 in pristine mint condition and he promptly folded the cover back so he could read it (Aaaughh!)

Dear Dave & Deni,

Regarding Laurence Matishak's "Origin of Cerebus" in the letter's page of Cerebus #47, I must say that I, too, had noted certain similarities between Cerebus and Bugs Bunny. Now, what with characters inspired by Foghorn Leghorn and Yosemite Sam populating this book, I'm just waiting for the day that you introduce an Elmer Fudd and a Daffy Duck clone. I can see it now:

CEREBUS (to "Elmer")
Okay, you've got Cerebus now. Do you want to run Cerebus through now, or wait until you get

AARDVARK COMMENT

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Cerebus home?

"DAFFY" (jumping up and down and flailing arms wildly):

RUN HIM THROUGH NOW!!! RUN HIM THROUGH NOW!!!

CEREBUS (to "Daffy")

You stay out of this He doesn't have to run you through now!

Well, you get the idea. Seriously though, you're doing a marvelous job on Cerebus. I am enjoying the High Society epic tremendously. Keep up the great work.

Mike Kertok
625 Nebraska Street,
Norman, OK. 73069

Be vewy vewy quiet. I'm hunting aawdvawks. Huhuhuhuh.

Dear Deni and Dave,

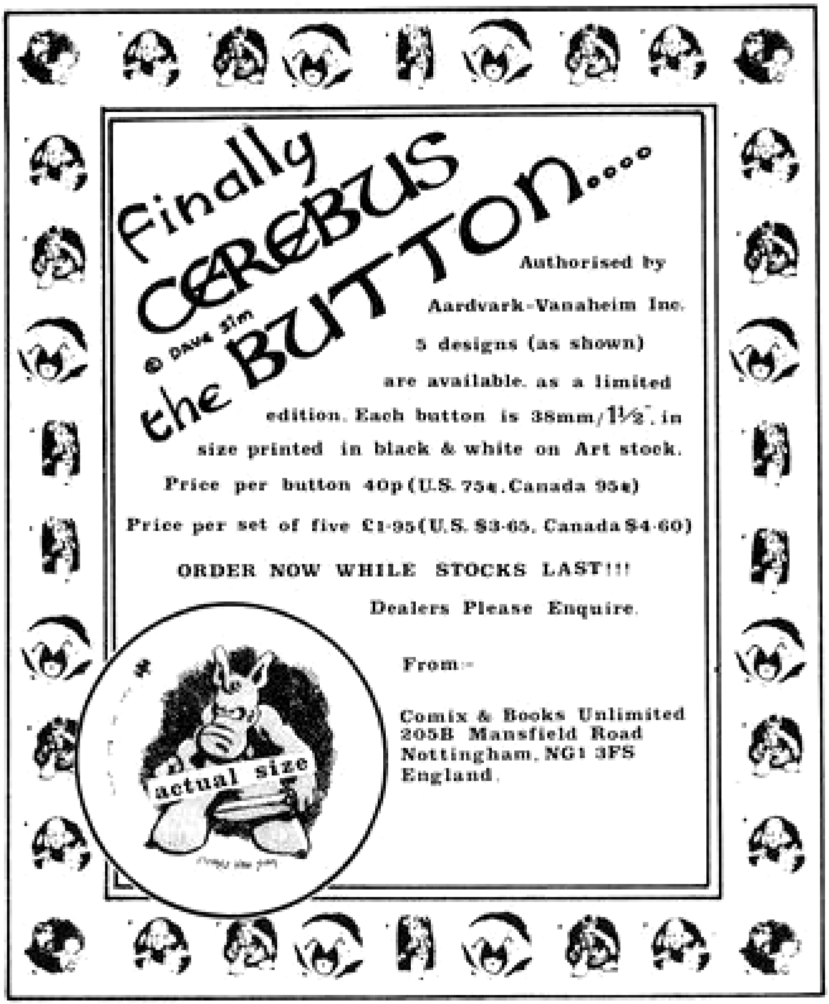
I hope you didn't take umgrage at the obnoxious LOC I sent you some months ago. It was a gag, though perhaps not a well-conceived one.

I've been following and supporting Cerebus since near the beginning, and it's been a consistent source of monthly joy for me. Thanks.

For real,

Jerry Biltman

Which obnoxious LOC was that, Jerry? I have trouble keeping track of them all. Please don't worry. If I took umbrage at every obnoxious LOC that came down the pike, there wouldn't be any umbrage left for



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MAPLECON 5
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Carleton University
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COMIX FAIR
July 29, 30, 31, 1983
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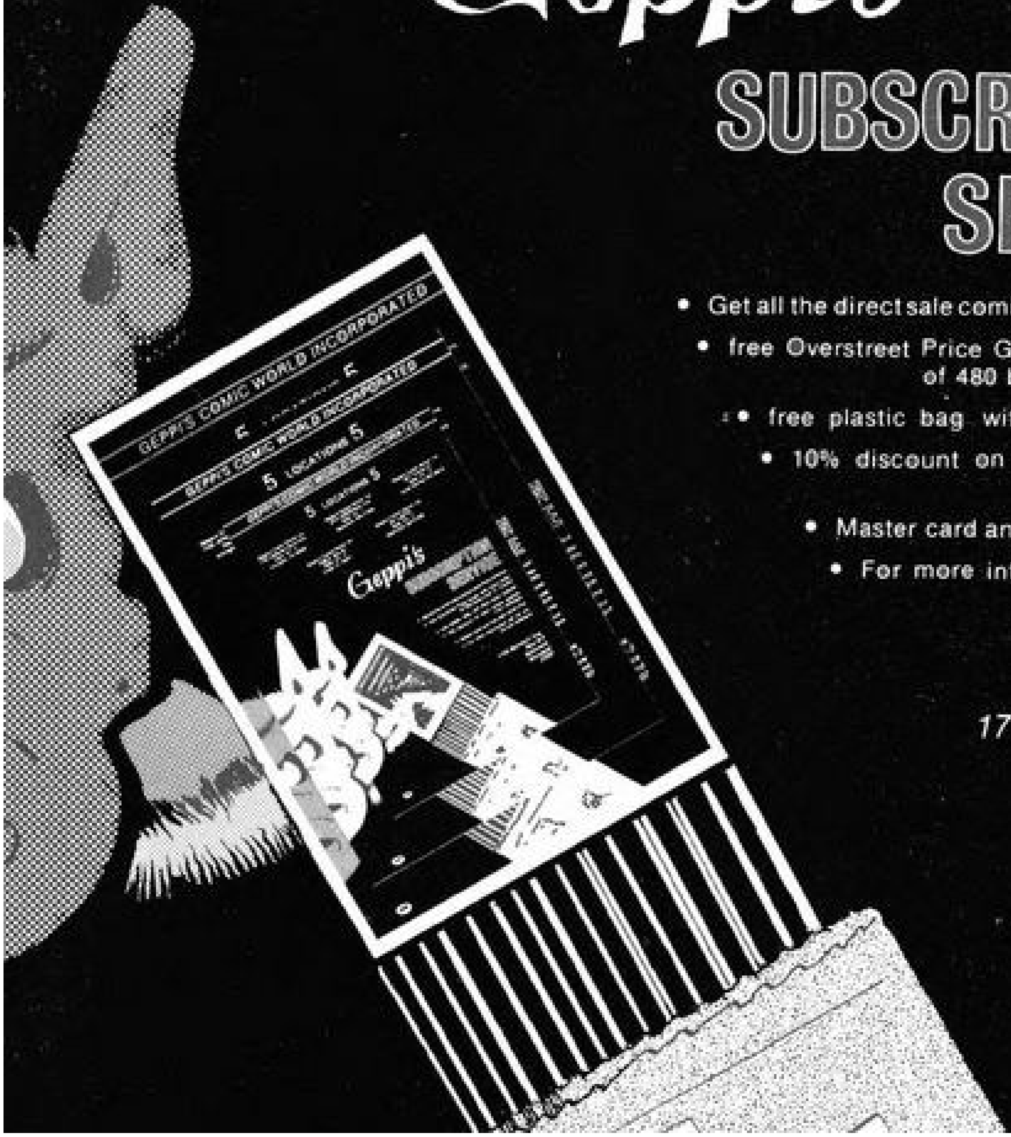

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anyone else to take. Then we'd have an umbrage shortage of dizzying proportions.

Dear Dave & Deni,

Why do people mention Daredevil and Cerebus the Aardvark in the same breath? Maybe it's just me, but in my opinion DD's not half as funny as Cerebus

I thought I'd better write to tell you that while you were away on tour someone knocked your drawing board on its side. #44 was great, except for the fact that there was no note from the publisher. I enjoy reading Deni's notes just the same as Dave's intros to the stories in the Swords Volumes. Speaking of which, this is one Cerebus fan who will continue to buy "Swords" even when I already have the stories they contain. I don't wish to sound gushing or anything but Cerebus the Aardvark is the best comic around at the moment. That may be just my opinion, but it's the only one I've got.

Stay young,

Graham P. Cousins
217 Haghview,
Vigo Village, Meopham, Kent

Thank you for your kind words, Graham, about Swords of Cerebus. It has become something of a thorn in my side between the people who are happy with what it contains and those who feel cheated by paying $5.00 for a bunch of reprints and a new story. There will, in all probability, be only two more Swords volumes (five and six). This will make the first twenty-five issues available for those who missed out, as well as providing an economical way for others to fill in the odd issue or two they may be missing for a complete set. After that I am hoping to arrange for the first twenty-five issues to be published as a collection ("Cerebus the Barbarian") followed sometime later by the publication of the 500 page "High Society" under one cover as a graphic novel. Swords will then be allowed to go out of print. I have arrived at this decision for a number of reasons (a) the difficulty involved in keeping each volume of Cerebus in print at all times, (b) the convenience of being able to introduce new fans to Cerebus with two large volumes and (at most) two dozen back issues, (c) a manageable format for someday having all 300 issues available (a twelve volume set of 500 page hardcovers), (d) the opportunity to expand Cerebus' exposure by making it available in bookstores.

I'm afraid keeping all of the stories in print is a classic example of trying to please all of the people all of the time. We will be reprinting all of the new stories from Swords under one cover after volume six comes out, for those who haven't been buying Swords. As usual, we welcome any comments you might have on this plan.

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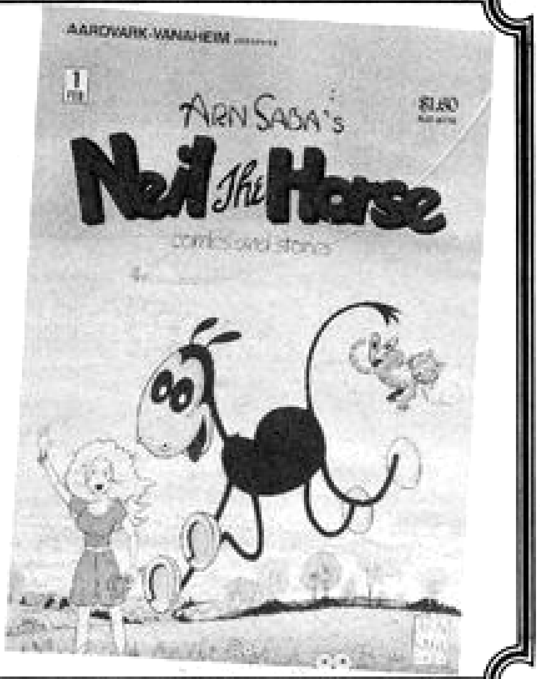

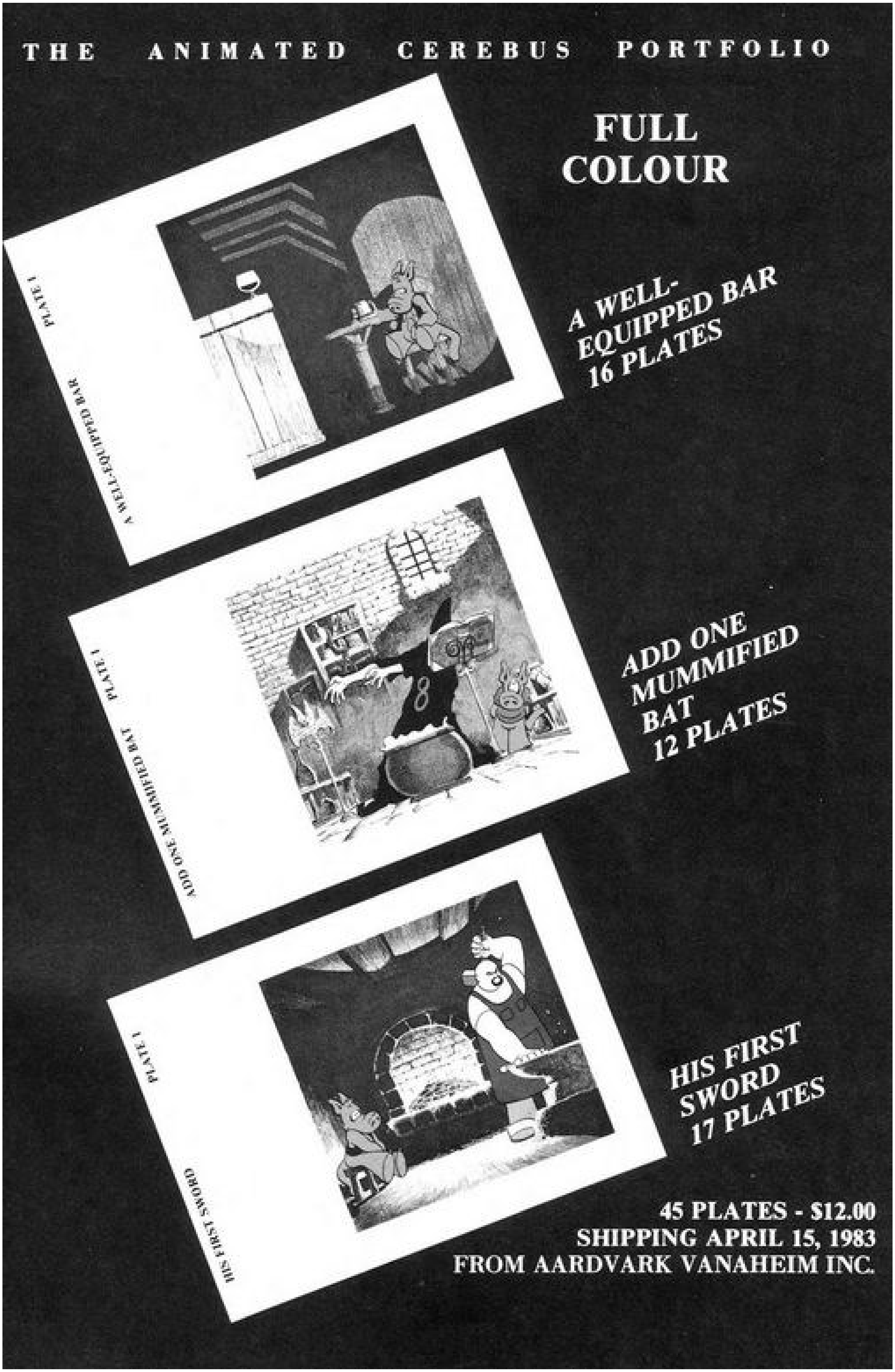
PLATE 1
A WELL-EQUIPPED BAR
PLATE 1
ADD ONE MUMMIFIED BAT
PLATE 1
HIS FIRST SWORD

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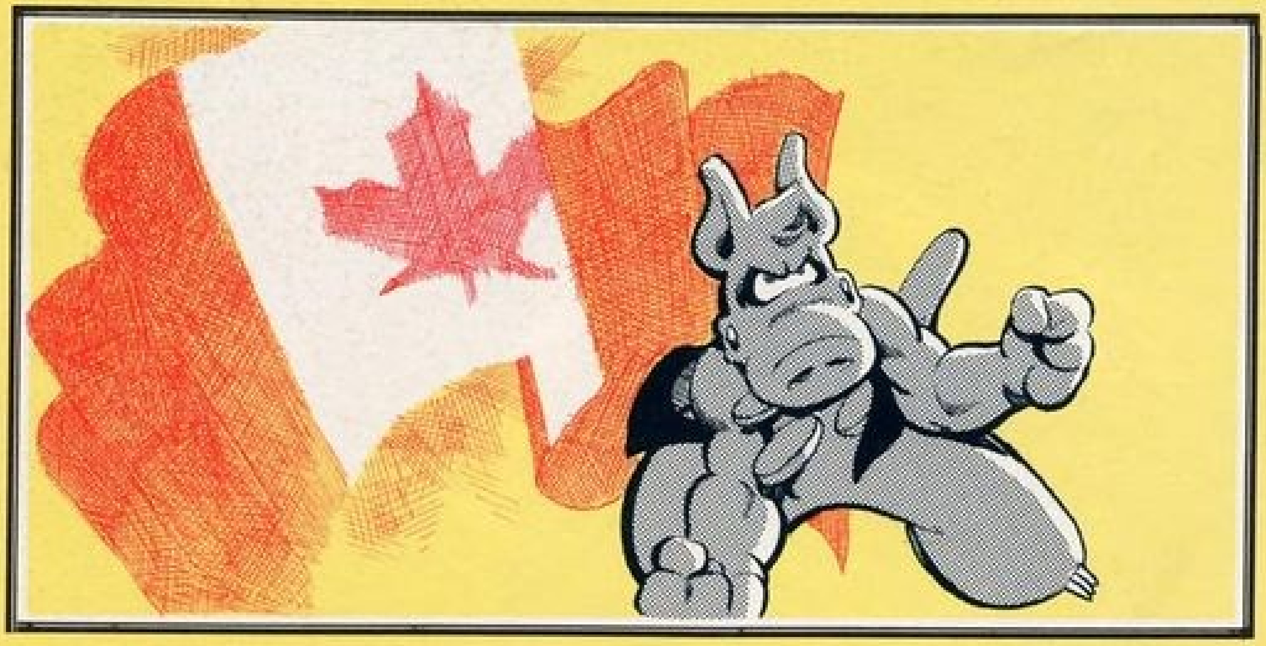

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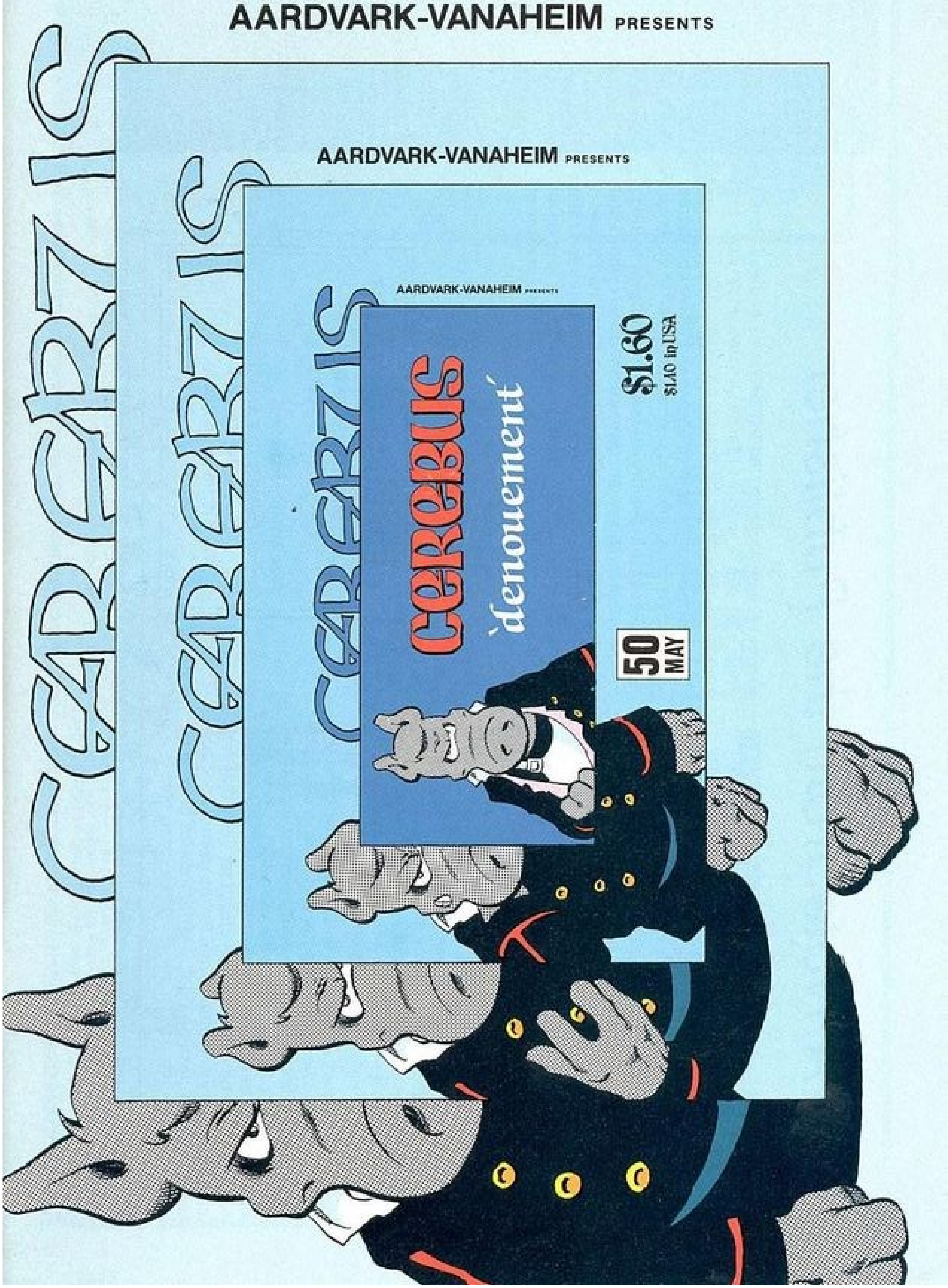
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A Note from the Publisher

The adventure ends and another begins.

This issue is the final chapter in Dave's 500 page graphic novel, "High Society". Together, we have watched an insignificant barbarian become a powerful political figure. I know, from the mail, that many of you were wondering how this story would resolve itself. If you had asked me, I couldn't have hazarded a guess. However, if you want to get the full impact of the story, I would suggest you take out some back issues (at least back to issue 45) and read your way up to this issue. I found the flow from issue-to-issue to be a big plus in appreciating the story in general and the ending in particular.

When the story was ended Dave discussed with me the possibility of dedicating this issue. In his own words to "Lech Walesa because of his political integrity against overwhelming odds", "the memory of John F. Kennedy and the words of his speechwriters for the idealism they invoke" "to Wendy Pini for her steadfast view that real heroes should cry real tears" and to "the memory of Gene Day for always pushing back the boundaries of graphic art".

Given enough thought, the list becomes endless. Some may call these people heroes, some may not, but choosing one person became a hopeless task.

There is one "personal hero", however that we both agree on, John Lennon, a man of peace, shot down in violence.

This month's Unique story said so completely my feelings on the subject of the man, I knew immediately when I first read it in Clay Geerdes Comix Wave that I had to see it published for a wider audience. Valentino's tribute to him says more than I could possibly say about the loss we all felt that day. We hope you will agree that it is a postscript that suits issue fifty.

Deni

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CEREBUS

VOL. 1 NO. 50 MAY 1983

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Assistant to the Publisher:
Karen McKiel

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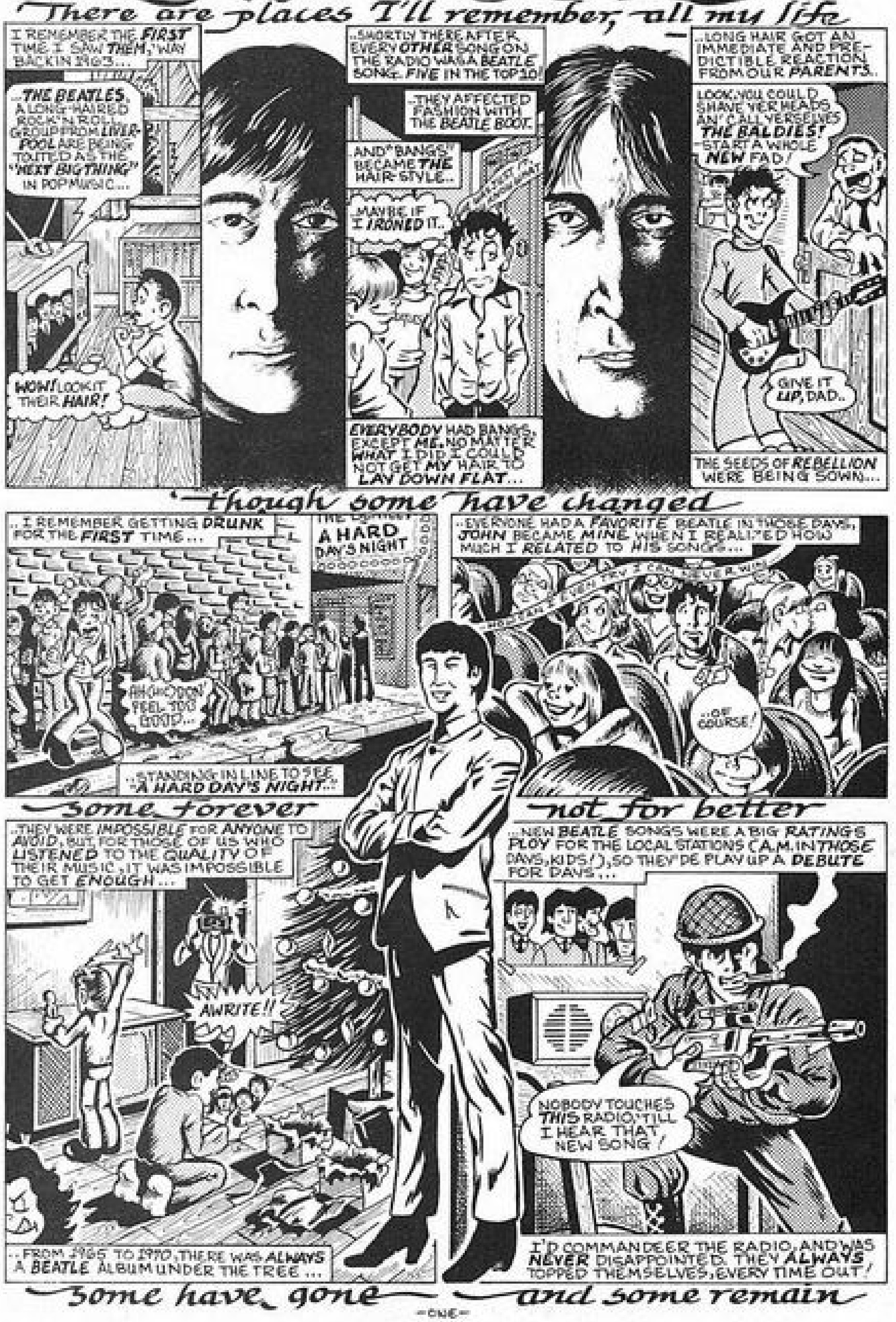
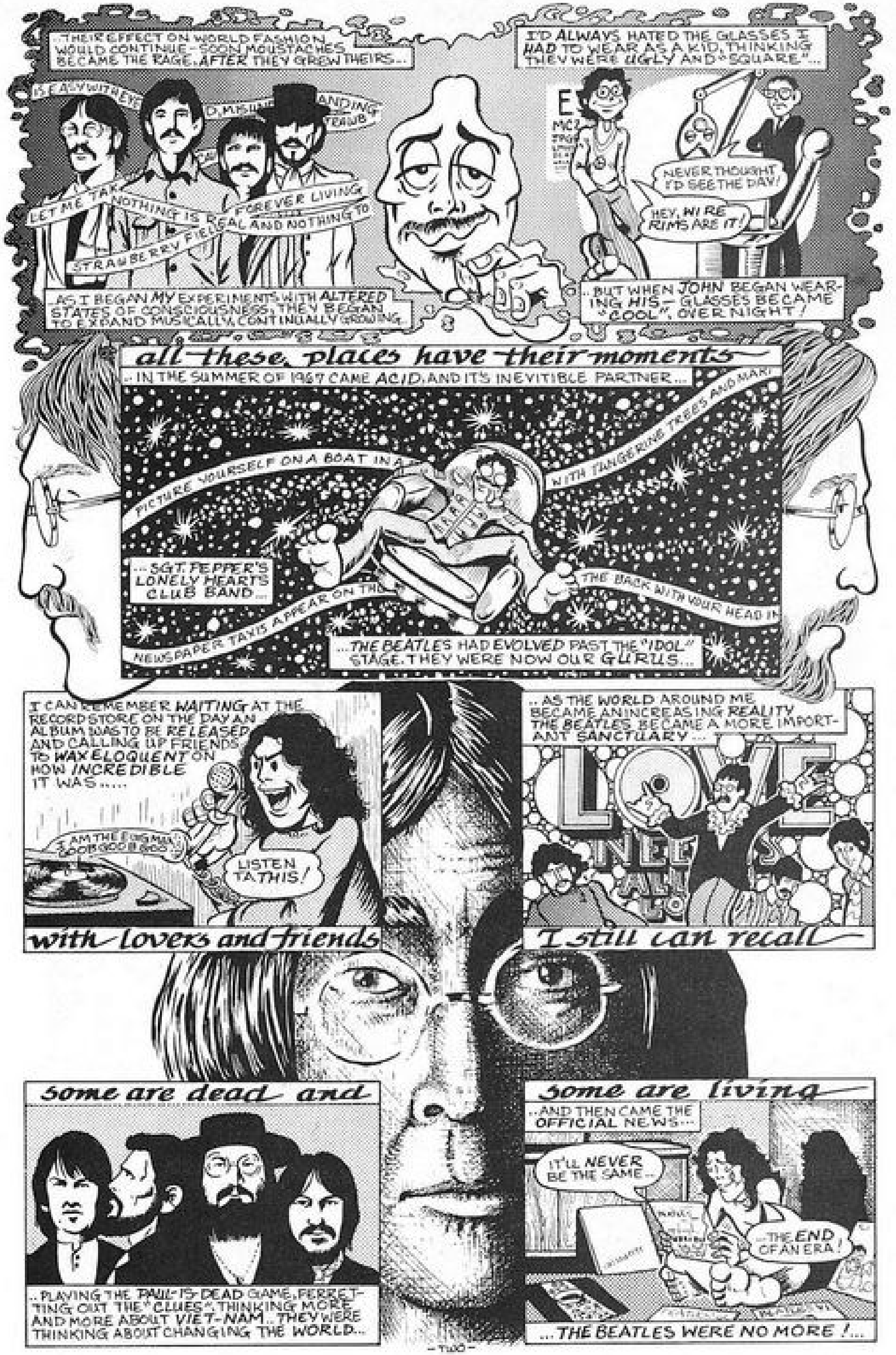
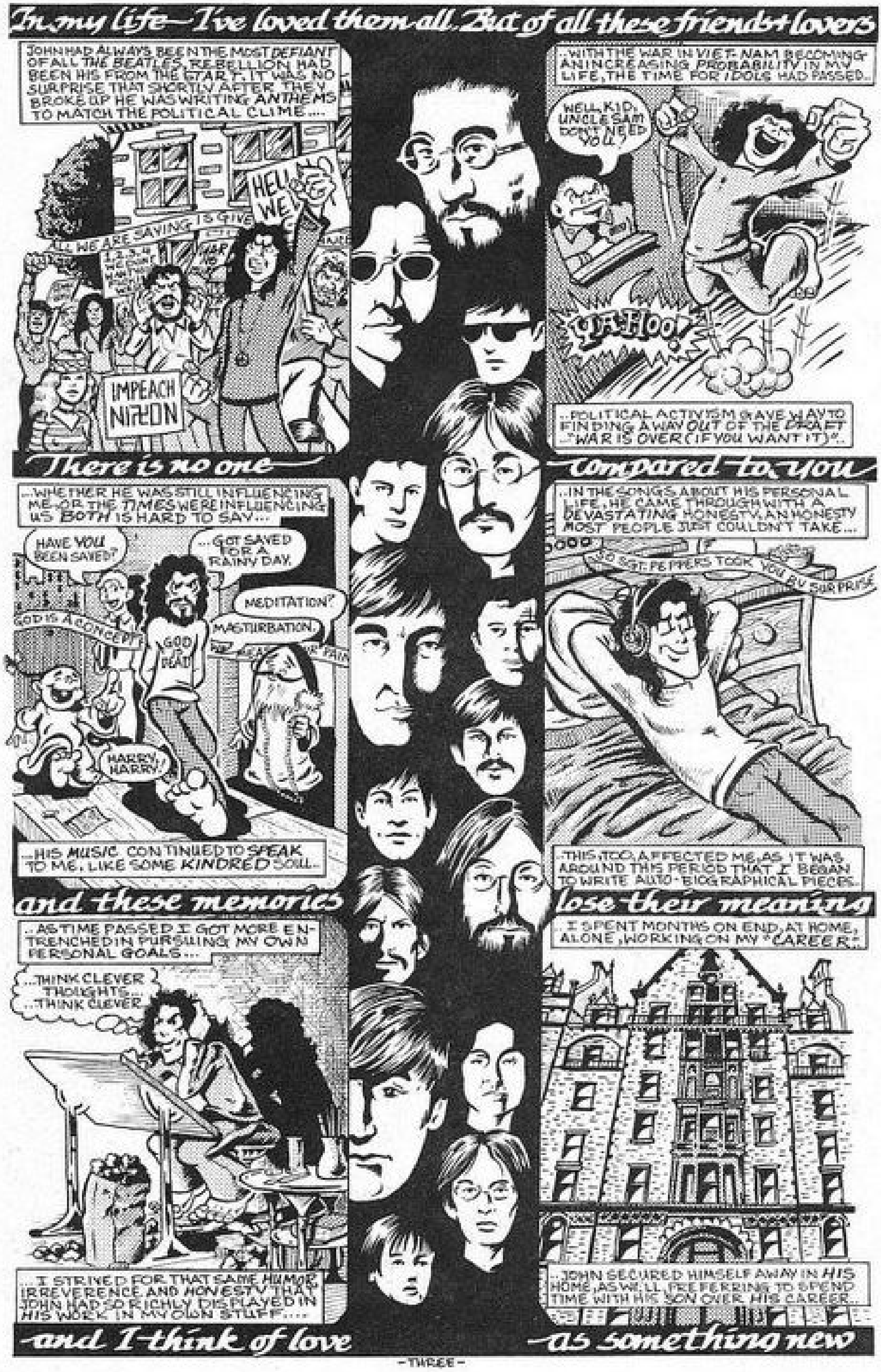
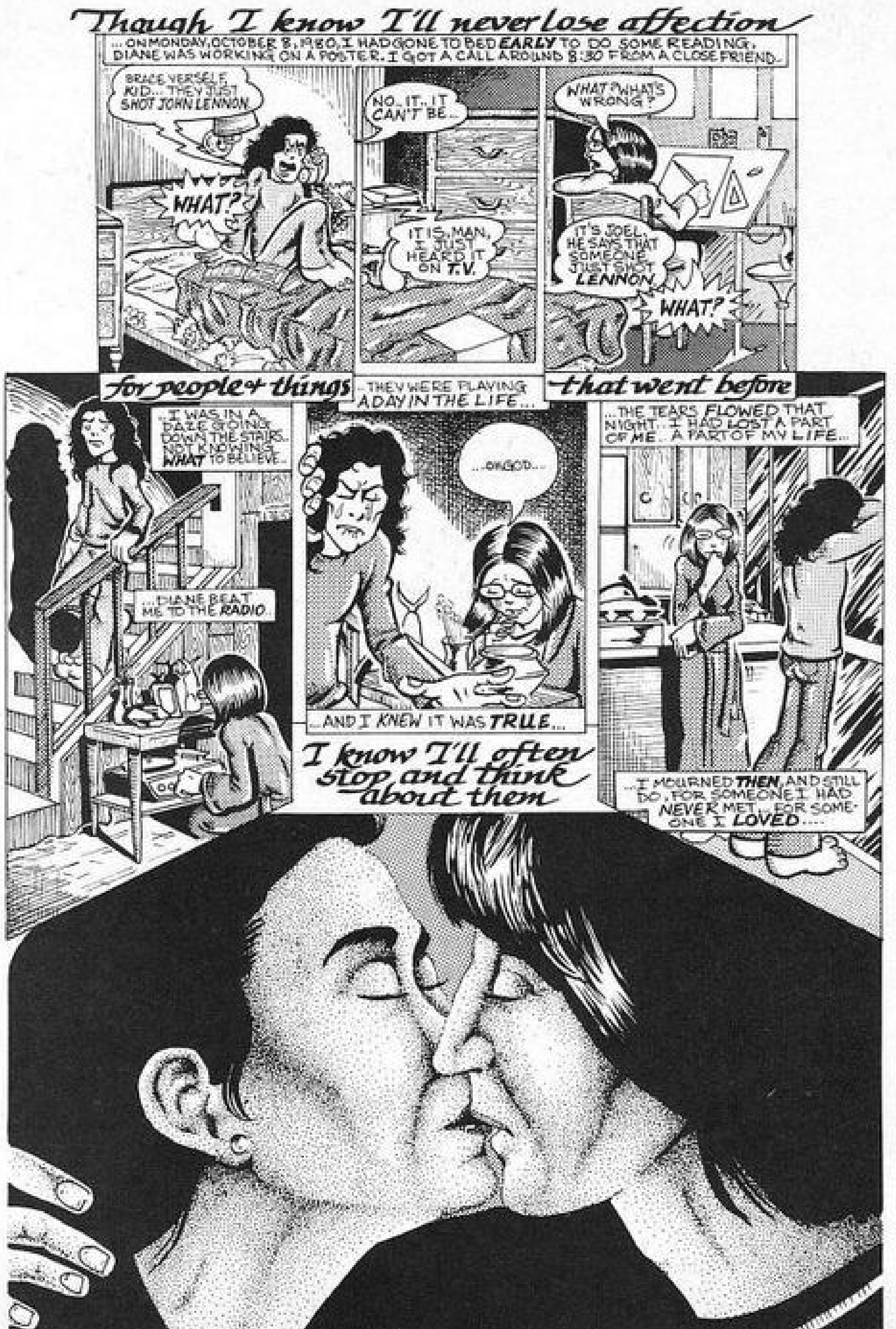
A UNIQUE STORY

IN MY LIFE


There are places I'll remember, all my life
I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I SAW THEM, 'WAY BACK IN 1963...
...THE BEATLES, A LONG-HAIRED ROCK 'N ROLL GROUP FROM LIVERPOOL ARE BEING TOUTED AS THE "NEXT BIG THING" IN POP MUSIC...
WOW! LOOKIT THEIR HAIR!
...SHORTLY THERE AFTER, EVERY OTHER SONG ON THE RADIO WAS A BEATLE SONG. FIVE IN THE TOP 10!
...THEY AFFECTED FASHION WITH THE BEATLE BOOT.
...AND "BANGS" BECAME THE HAIR-STYLE...
...MAYBE IF I IRONED IT...
EVERYBODY HAD BANGS, EXCEPT ME. NO MATTER WHAT I DID I COULD NOT GET MY HAIR TO LAY DOWN FLAT...
...LONG HAIR GOT AN IMMEDIATE AND PREDICTIBLE REACTION FROM OUR PARENTS.
LOOK, YOU COULD SHAVE YER HEADS AN' CALL YERSELVES THE BALDIES! - START A WHOLE NEW FAD!
GIVE IT UP, DAD..
THE SEEDS OF REBELLION WERE BEING SOWN...
'though some have changed
...I REMEMBER GETTING DRUNK FOR THE FIRST TIME...
A HARD DAY'S NIGHT
AH-OH-DON' FEEL TOO GOOD...
...STANDING IN LINE TO SEE "A HARD DAY'S NIGHT"...
...EVERYONE HAD A FAVORITE BEATLE IN THOSE DAYS, JOHN BECAME MINE WHEN I REALIZED HOW MUCH I RELATED TO HIS SONGS...
...OF COURSE!
some forever
not for better
...THEY WERE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO AVOID, BUT, FOR THOSE OF US WHO LISTENED TO THE QUALITY OF THEIR MUSIC, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO GET ENOUGH...
AWRITE!!
...FROM 1965 TO 1970, THERE WAS ALWAYS A BEATLE ALBUM UNDER THE TREE...
...NEW BEATLE SONGS WERE A BIG RATINGS PLOY FOR THE LOCAL STATIONS (A.M. IN THOSE DAYS, KIDS!), SO THEY'DE PLAY UP A DEBUTE FOR DAYS...
NOBODY TOUCHES THIS RADIO 'TILL I HEAR THAT NEW SONG!
I'D COMMANDEER THE RADIO, AND WAS NEVER DISAPPOINTED. THEY ALWAYS TOPPED THEMSELVES, EVERY TIME OUT!
some have gone
and some remain


..THEIR EFFECT ON WORLD FASHION WOULD CONTINUE - SOON MOUSTACHES BECAME THE RAGE, AFTER THEY GREW THEIRS...
IS EASY WITH EYE
D, MISUND
ANDING
LET ME TAK
NOTHING IS REAL AND NOTHING TO
FOREVER LIVING
STRAWBERRY FIEL
..AS I BEGAN MY EXPERIMENTS WITH ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS, THEY BEGAN TO EXPAND MUSICALLY & CONTINUALLY GROWING...
I'D ALWAYS HATED THE GLASSES I HAD TO WEAR AS A KID, THINKING THEY WERE UGLY AND "SQUARE"...
E
NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THE DAY!
HEY, WIRE RIMS ARE IT!
..BUT WHEN JOHN BEGAN WEARING HIS - GLASSES BECAME "COOL", OVER NIGHT!
all these places have their moments
..IN THE SUMMER OF 1967 CAME ACID, AND IT'S INEVITIBLE PARTNER...
PICTURE YOURSELF ON A BOAT IN A
WITH TANGERINE TREES AND MAR
...SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND...
NEWSPAPER TAXIS APPEAR ON THE
THE BACK WITH YOUR HEAD IN
...THE BEATLES HAD EVOLVED PAST THE "IDOL" STAGE. THEY WERE NOW OUR GURUS...
I CAN REMEMBER WAITING AT THE RECORD STORE ON THE DAY AN ALBUM WAS TO BE RELEASED AND CALLING UP FRIENDS TO WAX ELOQUENT ON HOW INCREDIBLE IT WAS.....
I AM THE EGG MAN GOO GOO G'JOOB
LISTEN TA THIS!
with lovers and friends
..AS THE WORLD AROUND ME BECAME AN INCREASING REALITY THE BEATLES BECAME A MORE IMPORTANT SANCTUARY...
LOVE
NEE
I still can recall
some are dead and
..PLAYING THE "PAUL"-IS-DEAD GAME, FERRETTING OUT THE "CLUES", THINKING MORE AND MORE ABOUT VIET-NAM.. THEY WERE THINKING ABOUT CHANGING THE WORLD...
some are living
..AND THEN CAME THE OFFICIAL NEWS...
IT'LL NEVER BE THE SAME..
..THE END OF AN ERA!
...THE BEATLES WERE NO MORE!...


In my life—I've loved them all. But of all these friends+lovers
JOHN HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE MOST DEFIANT OF ALL THE BEATLES. REBELLION HAD BEEN HIS FROM THE START. IT WAS NO SURPRISE THAT SHORTLY AFTER THEY BROKE UP HE WAS WRITING ANTHEMS TO MATCH THE POLITICAL CLIME....
ALL WE ARE SAYING IS GIVE
HELL NO WE
1,2,3,4
IMPEACH NIXON
..WITH THE WAR IN VIET-NAM BECOMING AN INCREASING PROBABILITY IN MY LIFE, THE TIME FOR IDOLS HAD PASSED..
WELL, KID, UNCLE SAM DON'T NEED YOU!
YA-HOO!
..POLITICAL ACTIVISM GAVE WAY TO FINDING A WAY OUT OF THE DRAFT ..."WAR IS OVER (IF YOU WANT IT)"..
There is no one
compared to you
..WHETHER HE WAS STILL INFLUENCING ME OR THE TIMES WERE INFLUENCING US BOTH IS HARD TO SAY...
HAVE YOU BEEN SAVED?
...GOT SAVED FOR A RAINY DAY.
MEDITATION?
MASTURBATION.
GOD IS A CONCEPT
GOD IS DEAD
HARRY, HARRY!
..HIS MUSIC CONTINUED TO SPEAK TO ME, LIKE SOME KINDRED SOUL..
..IN THE SONGS ABOUT HIS PERSONAL LIFE, HE CAME THROUGH WITH A DEVASTATING HONESTY, AN HONESTY MOST PEOPLE JUST COULDN'T TAKE...
SO SGT. PEPPERS TOOK YOU BY SURPRISE
..THIS, TOO, AFFECTED ME, AS IT WAS AROUND THIS PERIOD THAT I BEGAN TO WRITE AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL PIECES..
and these memories
lose their meaning
..AS TIME PASSED I GOT MORE ENTRENCHED IN PURSUING MY OWN PERSONAL GOALS...
...THINK CLEVER THOUGHTS... ...THINK CLEVER
..I STRIVED FOR THAT SAME HUMOR, IRREVERENCE AND HONESTY THAT JOHN HAD SO RICHLY DISPLAYED IN HIS WORK IN MY OWN STUFF....
..I SPENT MONTHS ON END, AT HOME, ALONE, WORKING ON MY "CAREER"..
..JOHN SECURED HIMSELF AWAY IN HIS HOME, AS WELL, PREFERRING TO SPEND TIME WITH HIS SON OVER HIS CAREER..
—and I think of love
—as something new


Though I know I'll never lose affection
...ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1980, I HAD GONE TO BED EARLY TO DO SOME READING. DIANE WAS WORKING ON A POSTER. I GOT A CALL AROUND 8:30 FROM A CLOSE FRIEND.
BRACE YERSELF, KID... THEY JUST SHOT JOHN LENNON.
WHAT?
NO. IT.. IT CAN'T BE...
IT IS, MAN. I JUST HEARD IT ON T.V.
WHAT? WHAT'S WRONG?
IT'S JOEL. HE SAYS THAT SOMEONE JUST SHOT LENNON.
WHAT?
for people + things
...THEY WERE PLAYING A DAY IN THE LIFE...
that went before
...I WAS IN A DAZE GOING DOWN THE STAIRS.. NOT KNOWING WHAT TO BELIEVE...
...DIANE BEAT ME TO THE RADIO.
...OH GOD...
...AND I KNEW IT WAS TRUE...
I know I'll often stop and think about them
...THE TEARS FLOWED THAT NIGHT.. I HAD LOST A PART OF ME.. A PART OF MY LIFE...
...I MOURNED THEN, AND STILL DO, FOR SOMEONE I HAD NEVER MET... FOR SOMEONE I LOVED....
In my life
VALENTINO ©1982.
I loved you more
in my life © 1965 - john lennon - paul mccartney
for yoko, sean and my own diane w/ ♡ - t.p.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C'
KITCHENER, ONTARIO
N2G 4R2

I received the first two issues of "SPACED" from Tom Stazer, artist and co-writer. It's a mighty interesting sf parody with a good cast of characters. You can make his publishers (Anthony Smith and Ken Donnell) very happy by sending along $1.25 (plus postage - let's say 50 cents, shall we?) for each issue. The character below, about to have one of his bodily orifices stuffed full of pizza is LIP..... published quarterly by Anthony Smith, 1414 Lynnview Drive, Houston, Texas 77005. Thanks for the drawing, Tom!

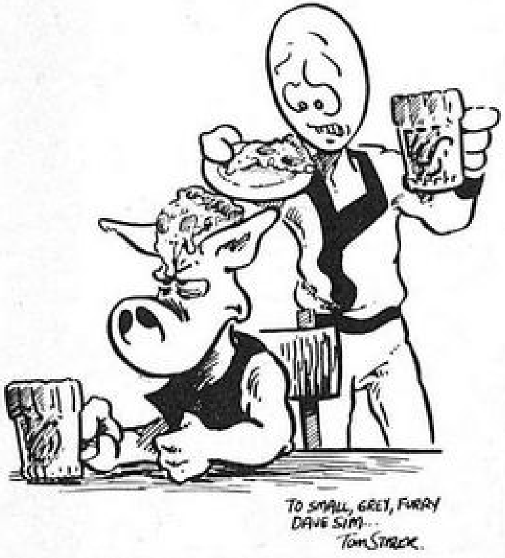
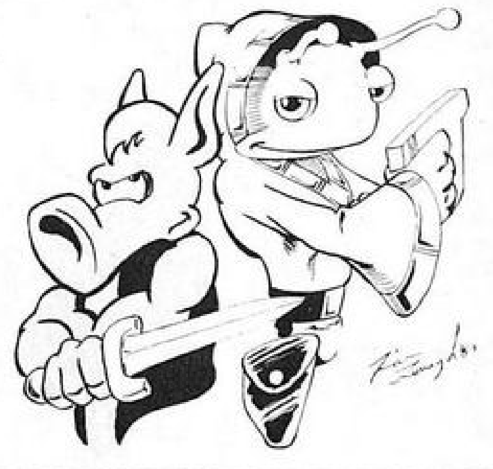

TO SMALL, GREY, FURRY DAVE SIM...
Tom Stazer.

Photo by Jean Messer

This month I attended Minicon in Minneapolis (or was that Minnecon in Miniapolis?) where I had a front row seat to watch Kara Dalkey and the "Shockwave" radio show folk perform her adaptation of Cerebus No. 6. Kara was a great Jaka and Curtis Hoffman is taking grumpy lessons which is improving his Cerebus voice immeasureably. Watch for the first four episodes on a picture disc, coming this fall from Aardvark-Vanaheim. The picture above is a Cerebus costume Jean Messer made for her brother David to wear.... David was exactly Cerebus' proportions, only six feet tall instead of three feet tall,"really, eh?". Watch this space for photos of the Moon Roach at the same con. Hsss!

Before we leave Minneapolis (so to speak), I would like to express my thanks to Kevin Lenagh (artist-writer) and Sandi Phelps (publisher) for the complete set of "Domino Chance" which is now perched next to my complete set of Spaced, which is, in turn perched next to my complete set of Ismet on the windowsill of my studio. I was sorry I didn't get a chance to "chew the fat" a while longer, but Kevin did me the great drawing of Domino and Cerebus reproduced below. Oh yeah - you can send them some money, too, $1.50 per issue plus 50 cents postage (# 1 is sold out. Nyah, nyah, I got one) Chance Enterprises, 2815 Hennepin Avenue South, Mpls. MN. 55408



AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C'
KITCHENER, ONTARIO
N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,

Before I get to the main part of my letter, let me tell you why I first started reading and collecting CEREBUS. The reason may be supplied by two names: Lord and Julius. For the past twenty years or so (no easy feat, when you realize that, by the time this sees print, if it does, I will very recently have become 22 years old) I have been, among other things, a Marxist of the Groucho sort. I was doing good Groucho imitations before I had ever even seen any Marx Brothers films.

Now, to the present. For the past year or so, I have worked in a comic specialty/used book shop in Wheaton, Md. Because of this job, I wind up looking at alot of comics; one would think that a person who works where I do would become sick of comics, but I find that the reverse is true; in fact, I am now collecting almost every Marvel, DC, and Alternate Company comic I can find. My first experience with CEREBUS, as an actual reader and collector, came with issue 32. I was unpacking a new shipment of comics and putting them out on the new comics rack when I came upon the issue in question. Although I had heard of this character, I had never seen a copy. Curious, I decided to leaf through it when I got off, to see if it was worth buying. I bought it, even though the artwork did not appeal to me, because of the character of Lord Julius. If not for my spying that one character, I would never have bought that issue, however, it is the writing and the artwork, which has since grown on me, which keeps me coming back.

I was overjoyed with number 46, which finally brought Chico into the storyline. I went into hysterics when I saw my letter(s) printed in number 45. The first time any of my letters to comics had been published.

I was overjoyed; many times I have seen Groucho's, Chico's and Harpo's figures in comics, but never had they been handled by someone like you, Dave, who was actually interested in the Marxes as other than usable characters. You were actually a Marx Brothers FAN!

Then I read your reply to John S. Olson's letter in number 48. It became obvious that I was wrong about you, Dave. You are not a Marx Brothers fan. You just inserted them as a way of getting a laugh, just like all the other times the Brothers had been used in comics.

To remind you, I will paraphrase John's letter. He asks for an appearance by that mute sorcerer, Adolphus The Great, the one that specialized in pulling an unbelievable number of magical items, such as a candle burning at both ends, from an ordinary looking pocket in a rather trashy looking trench coat. He suggests that Adolphus is the Harpo character. Your reply? I quote you: "Adolphus? Adolph was the boy's father, John. Harpo's real name was Arthur." With this answer, it became painfully abvious to me that you do not care about the Marx Brothers enough to do any real research into the Brothers lives. The only real research you did, I think, was watch the old films and ask someone what their names really were.

Your answer was wrong in two places. The lesser to the two mistakes was your stating Arthur as Harpo's real name. This error is forgiveable, since only a few places I know of give reference to his original first name. It was, originally, Adolph. He changed it to Arthur when Hitler rose to power in Germany and started the Holocaust. After all, it wouldn't do for a Jew to be named Adolph, would it? The other mistake is the unforgiveable one. You could have found the name of the boy's father in any book about the Marx Brothers. Up til now, in fact, I thought that such material was where you got your information from. Their father's name was not Adolph. It was Sam! Or "Frenchie", so called because he came from Alsace-Lorraine.

Although these two glaring mistakes have shaken my confidence and faith in you, Dave, I will keep on getting Cerebus in order for you to redeem yourself. The only thing is, the next time you insert a character who is a caricature of a famous person, please research all pertinent details thoroughly.

Well, now that I've taken you to task and cleared up that little problem with Harpo, I have also given you two options for a Harpo caricature. As Mister Olson suggests, you can give us Adolphus The Great.... or you can give us King Arthur!!

Ray Rose
1503 Ladd Street,
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

Mea culpa, mea marxima culpa (sorry about that). Don't worry Ray, we have received a few letters from irate "Marxists" over my mistake. I'm afraid it's been a while since I have read any of the biographical material that I have on hand, and I used "The Marx Brother's Scrapbook" for reference, the photo gallery of which lists Harpo as Arthur. You are right, though, it was extremely careless of me and I'll try to be more careful in the future. (honk honk)

Dear Dave and Deni,

No no, you silly twig, Harpo's name really was Adolph. Arthur

APPEARANCES

AARDVARKS, ALBINOS AND ALIENS
May 21, 1983
Weedsport, New York

LONE STAR
May 28th (3-5 p.m.)
511 E. Abram St., Arlington, Texas

May 28th (7-9 p.m.)
Town East Mall, Mesquite, Texas

May 29th (12-6 p.m.)
7738 Forest Lane, Dallas, Texas

MILLENIUM CONVENTION
June 11-12th, 1983
Skyline Hotel, Toronto, Ontario

CARRY ON BOOKS
June 18th, 1983
32 King St. N., Waterloo, Ontario

MAPLECON 5
July 15, 16, 17, 1983
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

COMIX FAIR
July 29, 30, 31, 1983
Houston, Texas

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C'
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was the King in England who ate at his Round Table consequently could never precisely determine his assigned place setting. This frustration caused him to become a little warped under the helm, an illness (in honor of the king) today known as arthritis. This information can be found in GROUCHO, HARPO, CHICO AND SOMETIMES ZEPPO by Joe Adamson (page 12) and MERRY OLDE ENGLAND: A LIE by Professor Irwin Corey (pages not numbered).

May a crazed supermarket busboy double-bag your sister.

Love and quiches,

David Allen
Olney Central College
5 Douglas Drive,
Olney, IL., 62450

honk honk honk

Dear Deni, not Dave, not even a little bit:

Pardon me? You say I should be commenting on Cerebus and the content therein? What a thing to say! I'll have you know it's that type of thinking that's kept most World War I vets from finding their shoes......

Kitchy-Kitchy Koo,

Mike Bannon
2453 Martin Drive,
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

P.S. I was thinking of forming a Deni Not Dave Even a Tiny Smidgen Fan Club, but, gee, where would we build the clubhouse? And the newsletter -- who would write it? Where would we hold our conventions and pep rallies? Not to mention the Deni merchandising. This is very confusing.....

Mike Bannon

And then Mike wrote;

Kaff, kaff:

I just want you to know that some of us have better things to do than write letters.

No, really, I'm fine,

Mike Bannon

After that Mike wrote;

Hello you sweet things:

I have a great idea -- no, a different one. Remember how DC used to set up some of their letters pages? They used to just print one or two sentence excerpts from a whole bunch of letters from a whole bunch of swell kids. If you did this, you wouldn't have to face not printing any of my letters, which must be aging you both prematurely, I'm sure.

Absolutely Sincerely,

Mike Bannon

When suddenly, out of a clear blue mailbox Mike wrote;

Dear David and Deni:

This has got to stop. I'm running out of stamps.

Highly Sincerely,

Mike Bannon

honk honk honk honk

Dear Dave,

In regards to your comments made in the interview with you and Deni published in Comics Scene # 9, where you mentioned George Tuska and Marty Pasko in the same breath and (presumably) rated their respective talents as equal......

I would like to say, on behalf of Pasko Fans everywhere, (I am putting my thumbs in my ears and wiggling my fingers)..........
PTHWWWWWWWWAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!!!!

(Loud Rasberry noise) (Lips pressed against tongue. Sound continues roughly 15 seconds getting drops of saliva all over typewriter).

---------Sincerely

T.E. Pouncey
Wichita, Kansas 67208

P.S. E-Man number 3 was written much better than Cerebus # 48.

I happen to think George Tuska and Marty Pasko are both very talented comics people. I thought that was what Dave McDonnell was driving at when he mentioned George as an artist to take over Cerebus. I just mentioned the first mainstream comics writer that came to mind. On the subject of E-Man # 3 being better written than Cerebus # 48, I suppose it would depend on the tastes of each individual reader.

Dear Dave:

Is it true you plan to print Cerebus sideways until John Byrne promises never to do it again?

Best,

Nick Danger
c/o First Comics
1014 Davis Street,
Evanston, IL., 60201

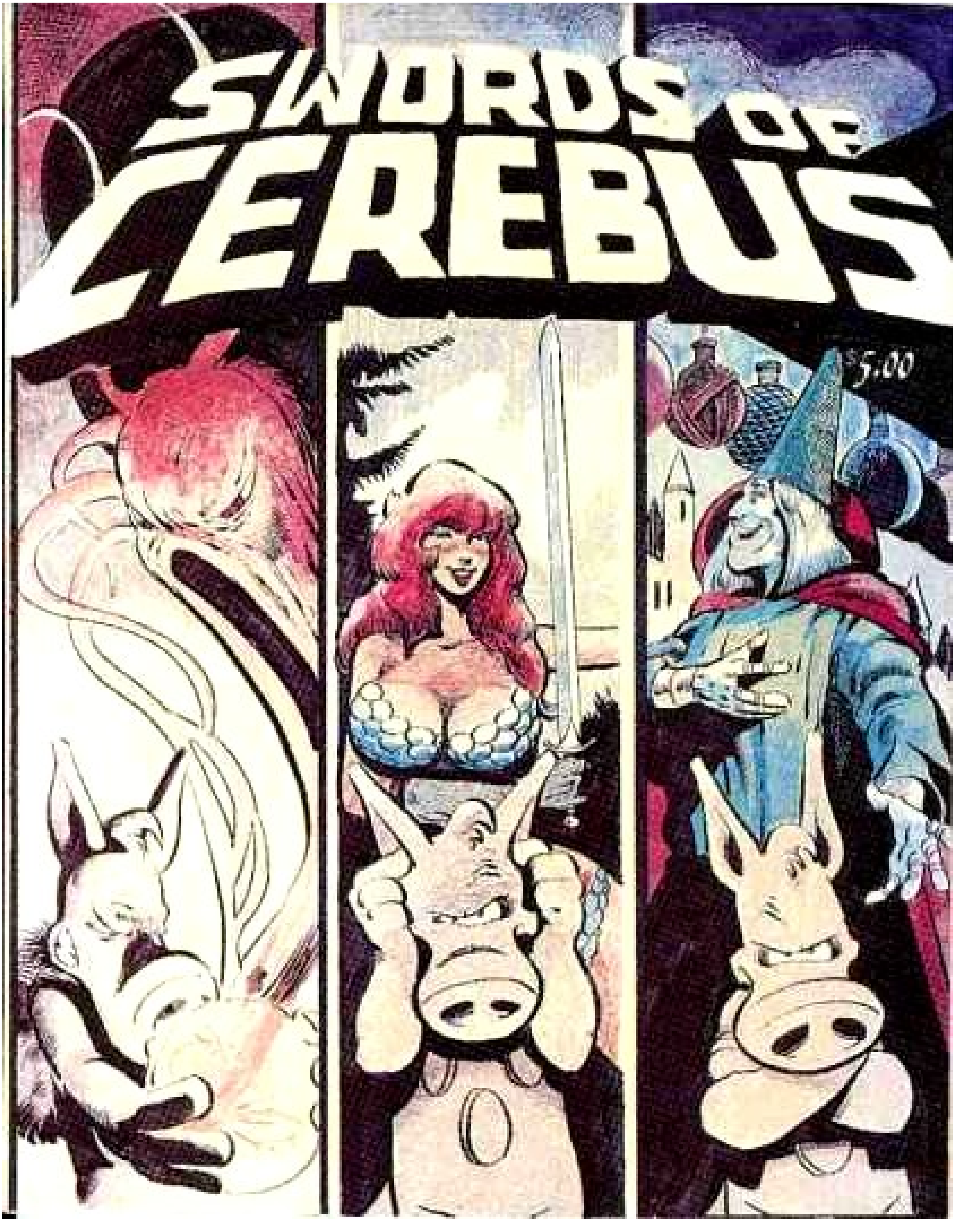
Sorry, Nick, I never answer questions from comic book characters (you are a comic book character aren't you?)

Aardvark-Vanaheim Photo by Karen McKiel

Marshall (I'd rather make my own mainstream) Rogers hits the last eight bars of "New York, New York" electrifying the fans at the Grand opening of Toronto's Silver Snail with his (by now) world-famous Sammy Davis, Jr. impression. Dave ("I'd rather swim in a mountain stream") Sim, pictured at left, crosses Toronto off Mr. Rogers' amazing itinerary. "That just leaves Dubuque, Columbus and Witchita" he notes.

SWORDS OF CEREBUS

COVER GALLERY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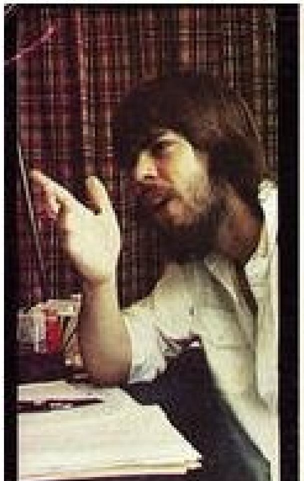


"Cerebus is (and I do not state this lightly) a true heir to Carl Bark's duck stories."

Kim Thompson
THE COMICS JOURNAL

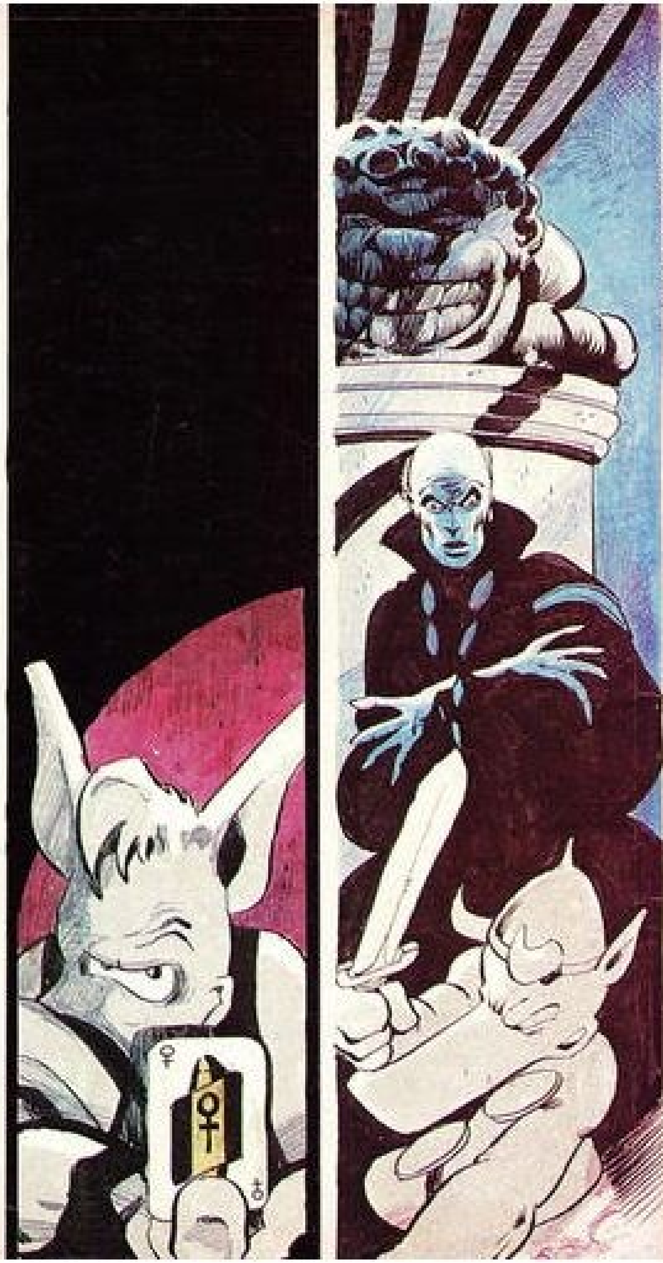
"('Song of Red Sophia') is great, Dave. There are some really nifty sequences. The granola page. Sophia's dance (Bum BaDa Da Da) NEAT! Thanks from this old creature of the drawing caves."

Frank Thorne

"I thought Cerebus the Aardvark was great and thoroughly enjoyed the Elrod sequence, particularly the bit with the black blade."

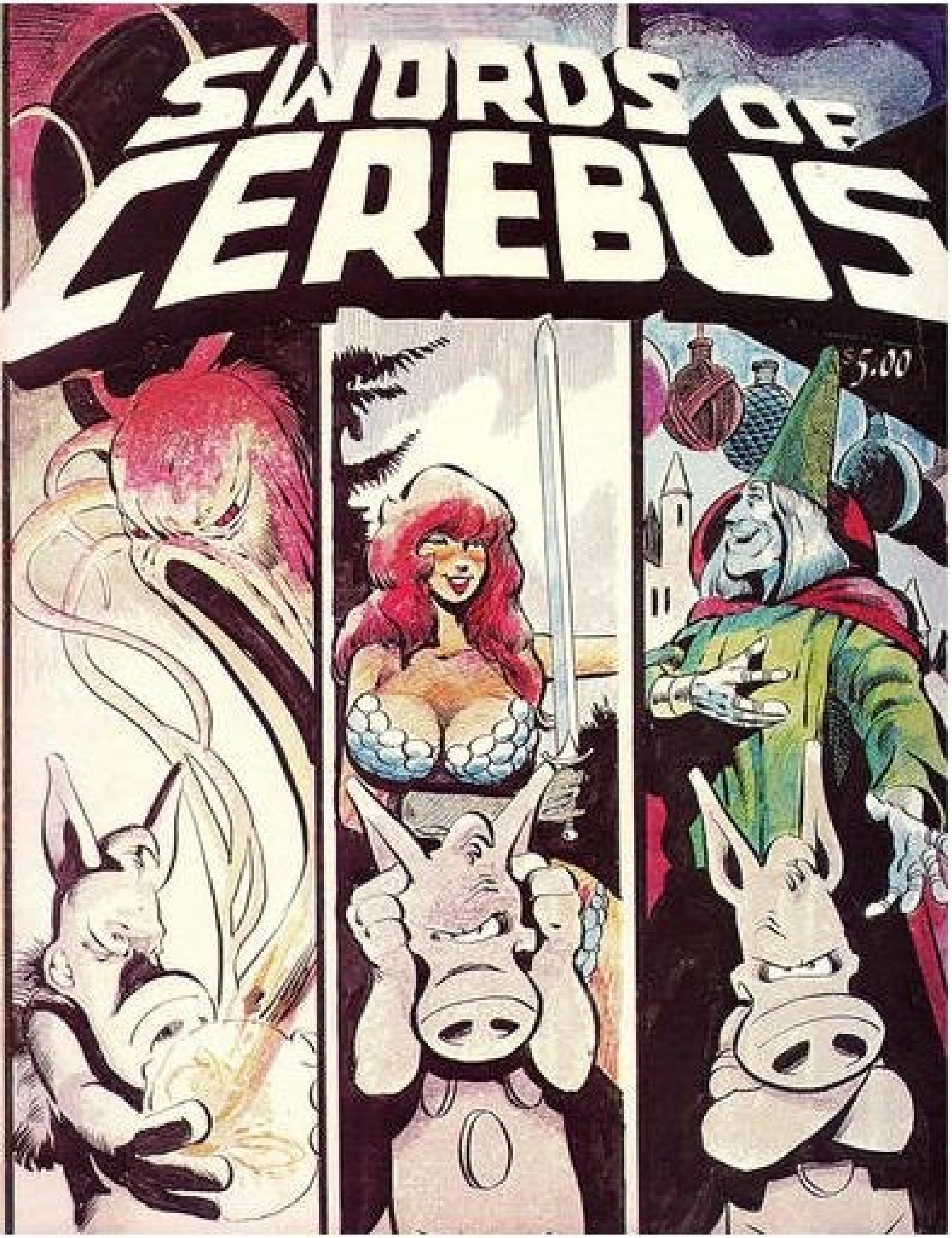
Michael Moorcock

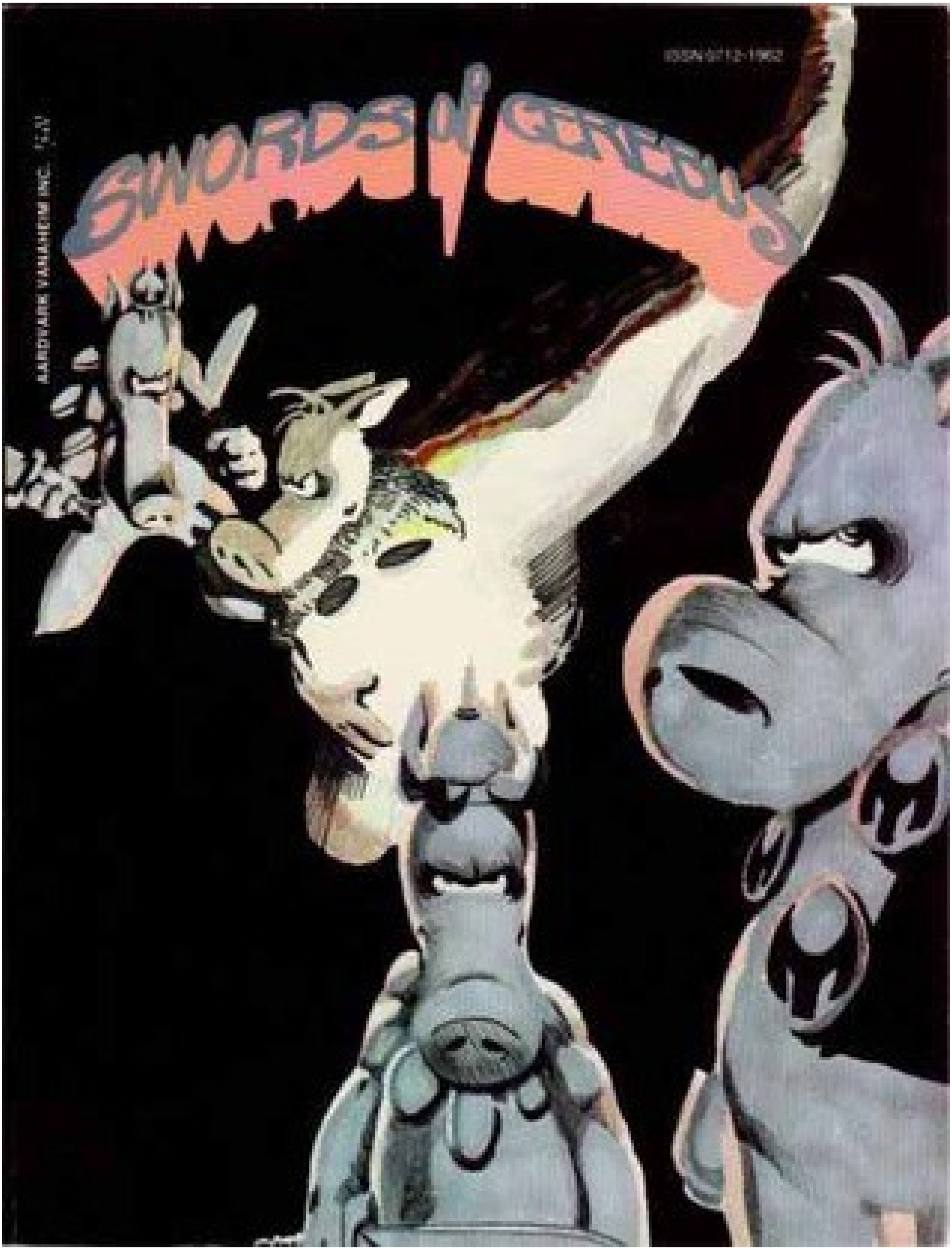
ISBN 0-919359-00-6



Swords of Cerebus Vol. 1

SWORDS OF CEREBUS

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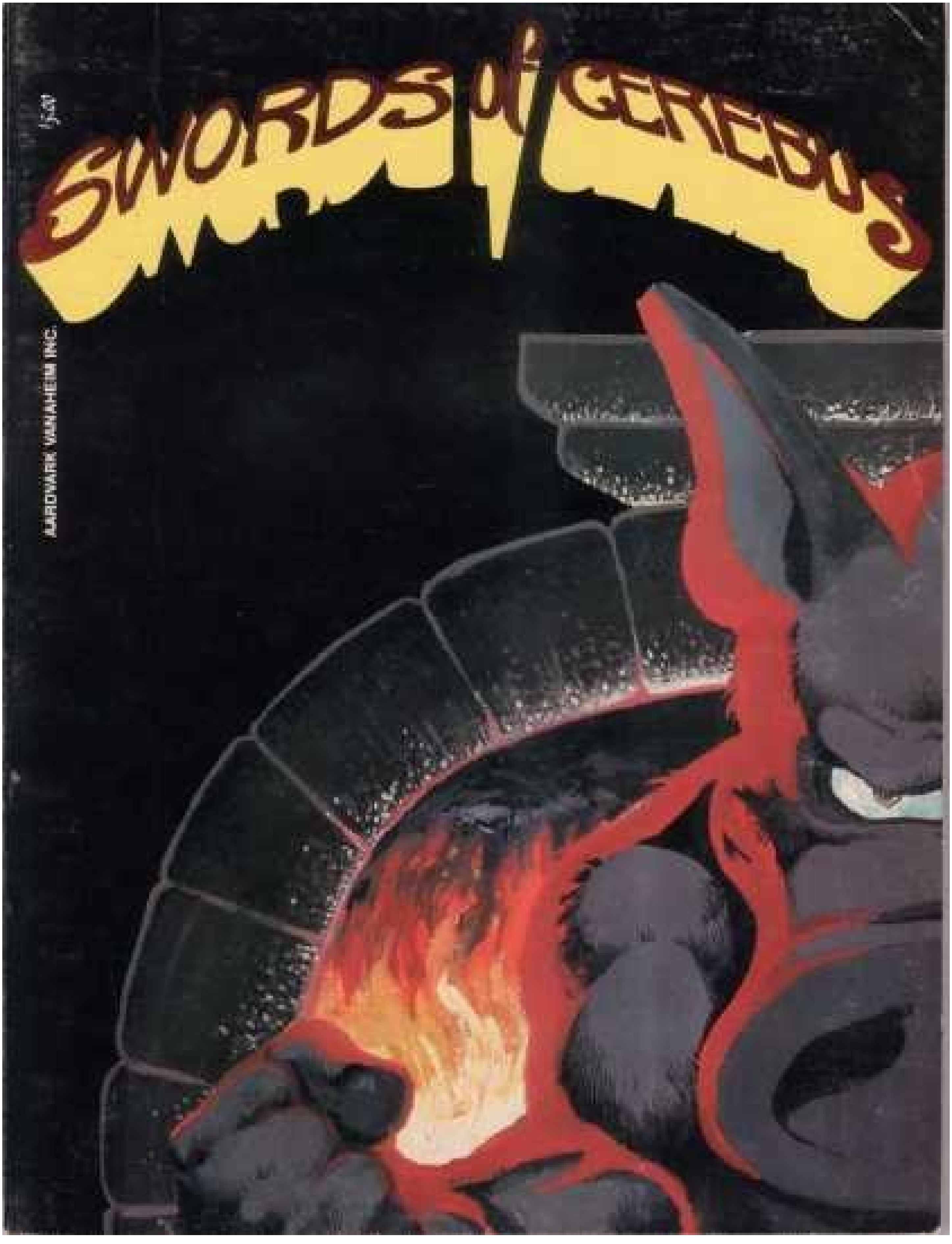

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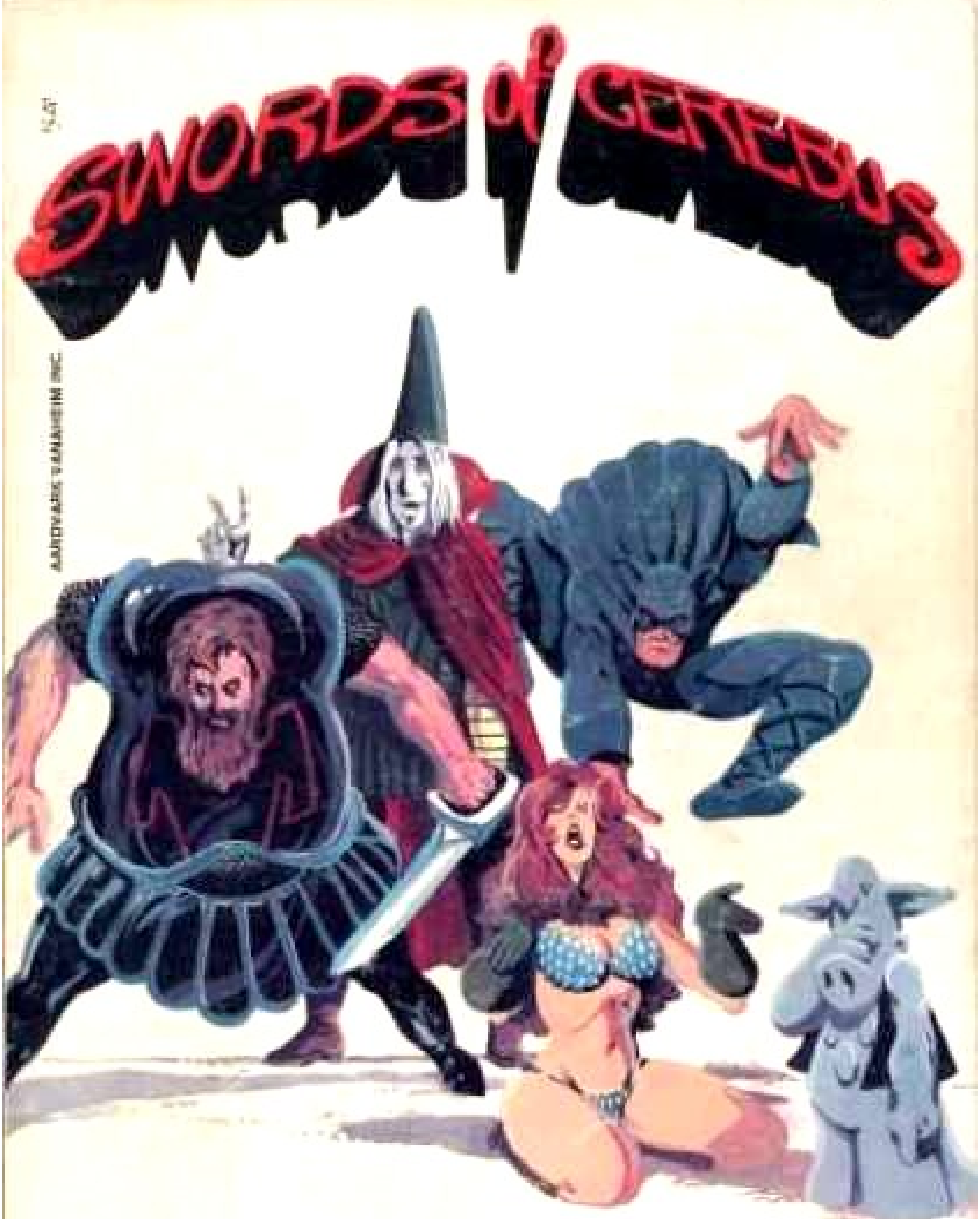
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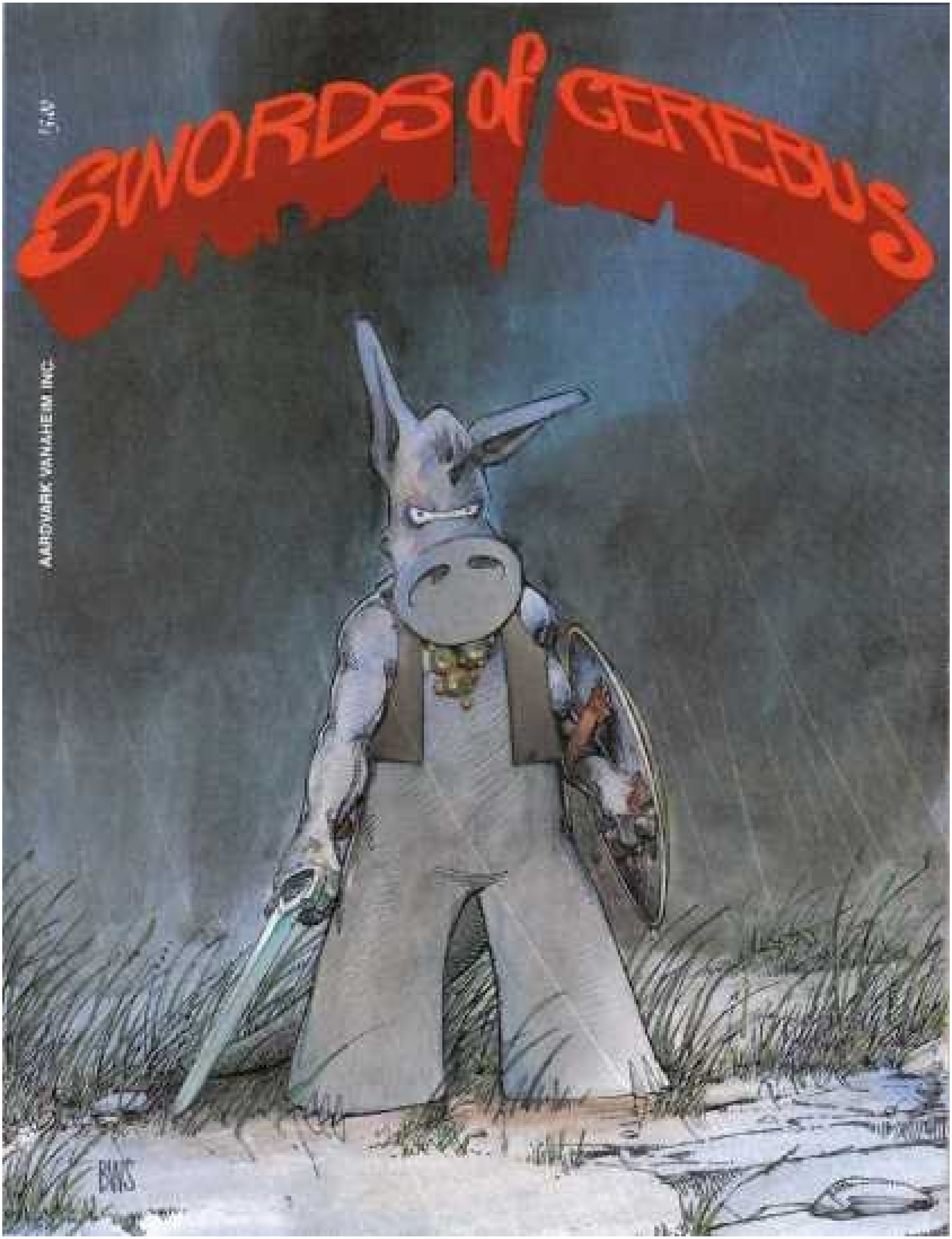
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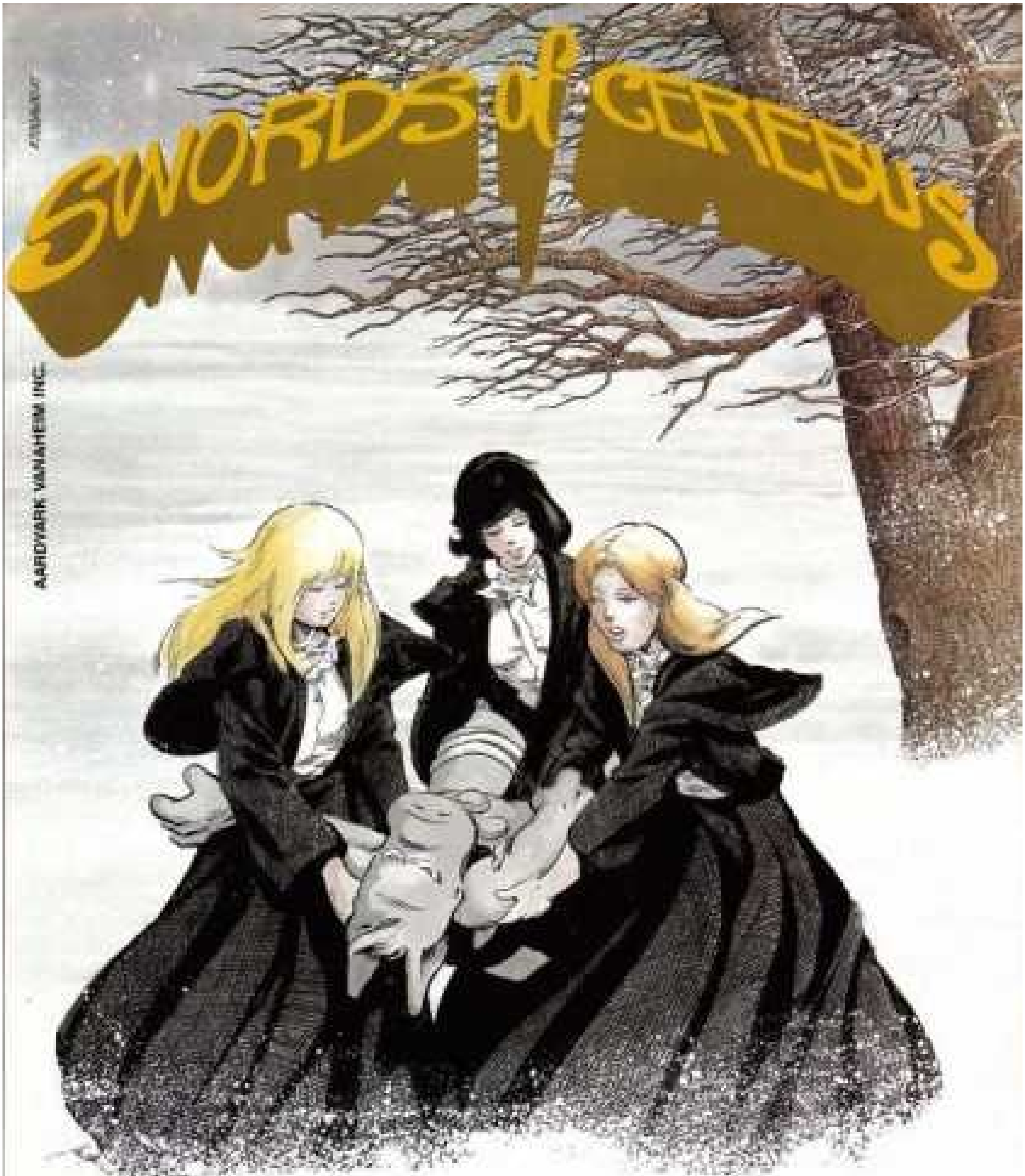
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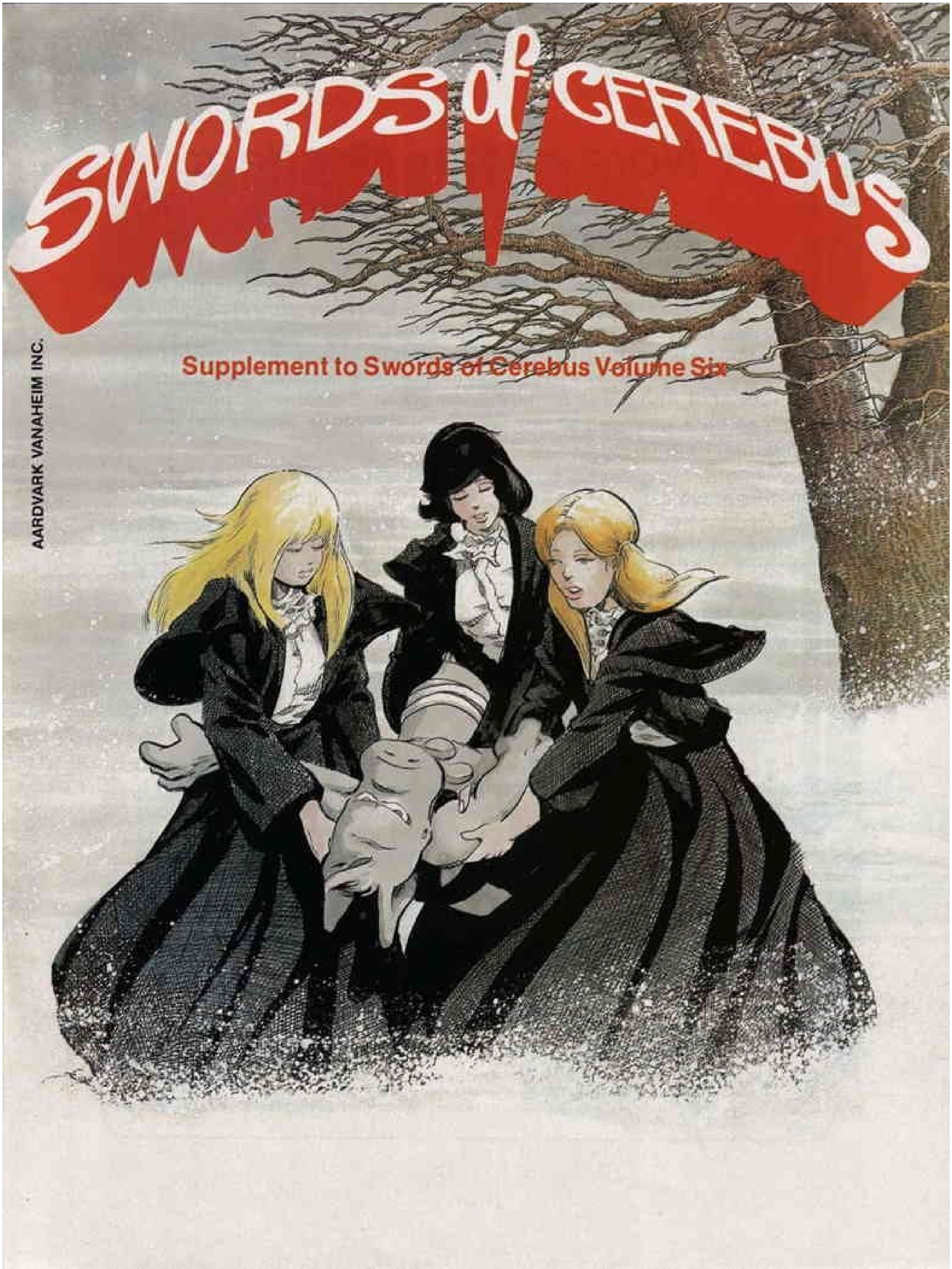

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Supplement to Swords of Cerebus Volume Six

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